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WOMAN

VOLUME V

WOMEN OF MEDIÆVAL FRANCE

BY

PIERCE BUTLER, PH. D.

OF TULANE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA

EDITION DE LUXE

Limited to One Thousand Numbered Copies

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ODETTE DE CHAMPDIVERS AND CHARLES VI.

After the painting by Albrecht de Vriendt

The king, now often idiotic when he was not raving, . . . To amuse and distract him, and also to strengthen the Burgundian influence, the Duke of Burgundy provided him with a fair child as playmate and mistress. To the sway once held by Valentine over Charles there now succeeded Odette. She was little more than a child, but she became mistress as well as playfellow of the mad king. Of humble origin (daughter of a horse dealer), she wears in court history a name better than that she was born to, Odette de Champdivers; and the people, indulgent of the sin of the mad king, called her "la petite reine." She was happy, it seems, and kind to the king, amused him, was loved by him; and, more true to him than was quite pleasing to the Burgundians, did not play false to France in later years when Burgundy and England were leagued together.

Woman

In all ages and in all countries

VOLUME V

WOMEN OF MEDIÆVAL FRANCE

BY

PIERCE BUTLER, PH. D.
Of Tulane University of Louisiana

ILLUSTRATED

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TO

M. L. B. AND J. P. B.

2047593

Preface

PREFACE

IT is the customary privilege of the author to meet you at the threshold, as it were, bid you welcome, and in his own person explain more fully and freely than he may elsewhere the plan and intent of his book. After you have crossed this imaginary boundary you may judge for yourself, weigh and consider, and condemn even with scant regard for the author's feelings; for as a guest it is your privilege. But here outside I am still speaking as one with authority and unabashed; for I know not, and will not let myself fancy, how the reader will censure me. Though the little that need be said may be said briefly, I trust the reader will be a reader gentle enough to permit me graciously this word of general comment upon the whole work.

From the mediæval *Ladies' Book,* of a kind that will be referred to in the following pages, to the very latest volume of *Social England,* or more aptly, perhaps, to the most local and frivolous *Woman's World* edited by an Eve in your daily paper, all the little repositories of ebbing gossip help immensely in the composition of a picture of the life of any period. They are not history; by the dignified historian of a few generations ago they were neglected if not scorned; but more and more are they coming to their own as material for history. In like manner the volume hardly claims to be a formal history, but rather ancillary to history. It has been the aim to present pictures from history, scenes from the lives of historic women, but above and through all

to give as definite an idea as might be of the life of women at various periods in the history of mediæval France.

The keenness of your appetite for the repast spread will be the measure of the author's success. But whether I have been successful or not, the purpose was as has been said. Figures more or less familiar in history have been selected as the centrepieces; but scarcely anywhere have I felt myself bound to expound at length the political history of France: that was a business in which few women had a controlling voice, however lively their interest may have been, however pitifully or tragically their fate may have been influenced by battle or politics or mere masculine capricious passion.

"Theirs not to reason why;
Theirs but to do or die,"

may be said of the soldier. Of these women of mediæval France, as of all in the good days of old, it might be better said that it was not even theirs to do; the relief of action was not theirs; but to suffer and to die, without question. Yet the life was not all pain and suffering and sadness, as the scenes depicted will show. It is merely that the laughter has fallen fainter and fainter and died away—comedy perishes too often with the age that laughed at it—while the tears have left their stain.

With this little hint to the reader I have done, and let the book tell him more if he please. To those who helped me in the writing of, nay, who made it possible to write this book, my gratitude is none the less strong that I do not write them down in the catalogue. Many a page will bring back vividly to them as well as to me the circumstances under which it was written. May these memories sweeten my thanks to them.

PIERCE BUTLER.

New Orleans.

Chapter I

In the Days of the Capetian Kings

I

IN THE DAYS OF THE CAPETIAN KINGS

IN the older conception, history was a record chiefly of battles, of intrigues, of wicked deeds; it was true that the evil that men did lived after them; at least, the even tenor of their ways was passed over without notice by the chroniclers, and only a salient point, a great battle or a great crime, attracted attention. If little but deeds of violence is recorded about men, still less notice does the average mediæval chronicler condescend to bestow upon women. History has been unjust to women, and this is preëminently the case in the history of France at the period with which we are to begin in this chapter. The age of the good King Robert was an age of warfare; the basic principle of feudalism was military service; and what position could women occupy in a social system dependent upon force? The general attitude toward women is hinted at by the very fact that, in the great war epic of *Roland,* the love story, upon which a modern poet would have laid much stress, is entirely subordinated; it is the hero and his marvellous valor that the poet keeps before us. The heroine, if she can be so called, the sister of Roland's brother in arms, Oliver, is not once named by the hero. In the midst of the battle, when Roland proposes to sound his horn to summon Charlemagne to his aid, Oliver reproaches him:

> "Par ceste meie barbe!
> Se puis vedeir ma gente soror Alde,
> Vos ne gerrez jamais entre sa brace."

[By my beard! if I live to see my sister, the beautiful Aude, you shall never be her husband!] After this she is mentioned no more until Charlemagne returns to Aix with the sad news of Roland's heroic death. Then comes to him *la belle* Aude to ask where is her betrothed Roland. "Thou askest me for one who is dead," says Charlemagne; "but I will give thee a better man, my son and heir, Louis." "I understand thee not," replies Aude. "God forbid that I should survive Roland!" She falls fainting at the emperor's feet, and when he lifts her up he finds her dead. Then he calls four countesses, who bear the body into a convent and inter it, with great pomp, near the altar.—(ll. 3705–3731.) *La belle* Aude has fulfilled her mission when she dies for love of Roland. If she had been on the battlefield, she might have dressed Roland's wounds, since the rôle of physician and nurse was frequently played by women. Otherwise there is little use for women in an age of warfare, and so we shall find most of the good women passed over in silence, and only those of more masculine traits prominent in the earlier parts of our story.

Before we can begin the story of those women whose names have come down to us from the France of the year 1000, it is necessary to have some sort of understanding of the social, if not of the political, condition of France, to learn what sort of influences environed and moulded the lives of women in those days. Such a survey of society, indeed, will be useful for the whole period of the Middle Ages, and will serve as a background for the figures of the women we shall have to consider, whether they be saints or sinners.

At the beginning of the reign of the good King Robert, the France over which he ruled was still scarcely consolidated. The power of the kings of France hardly yet

extended, in reality, over more than the little duchy of France, a territory bounded, roughly, by the cities of Orléans on the south, Sens on the east, Saint-Denis on the north, and Chartres on the west. Not only were the more powerful barons, counts, and dukes, among whom the land was parcelled out, subject to the kings only at their good pleasure, but the very people over whom they directly ruled were still dimly conscious of the fact that they sprang from different races. Even as late as the middle of the tenth century we hear of "Goths, Romans, and Salians" as more or less distinct. The fusion of the several races on the soil of France was, however, at that time probably complete in all but name, if we except the Celts in Brittany; even the latest arrivals in France, the Norsemen, had ceased to be mere wandering freebooters and were fast developing, like the rest of France, a caste of hereditary nobles whose title and power depended upon the tenure of land.

We may roughly divide the society of the period into four classes. In the first we must place the nobles and their bands of retainers. In the second we find the churchmen, the greater among whom are hardly to be distinguished from the secular nobility, Below these, and a long distance below, come the inhabitants of the larger towns, the merchants and the better class of artisans. At the bottom, trodden down to the very soil from which they are forced to extract food for all the rest, and perhaps, if any is left, for themselves, come the peasantry.

Since the disruption of the great conglomerate empire of Charlemagne, the power of the nominal kings of France had been gradually restricted. Powerless to protect the kingdom from the attacks of foreign enemies, the king was also powerless to preserve order within it. Personal immunity from force could be obtained only by the use of

force; and if one were not strong enough to protect one's self, the only way was to purchase protection from a stronger neighbor. This was the reason for the growth of the complicated system of feudalism, with whose remote origins and exact details we are not here concerned.

As regards the influence of the feudal system upon the position of women, it might be safe to say that feudalism at first made little change in their condition. They enjoyed neither more nor less rights than during the ages of barbaric *Sturm und Drang;* but certainly they found a little greater security against violence and oppression, since greater security was the general aim and the general effect of feudalism. The weak must always occupy a relatively better position in a compactly organized society than in a democracy of violence; and so the feudal system, retaining for women such small civil rights as they already possessed, added a greater personal security.

This was not all. Though the transmission of property, on which all social standing was based, was regularly from male to male, and though female heirs might be passed over or disposed of by violence or chicanery, there were exceptions, which become more numerous as we go on. It cannot be said that there was at any time absolute prohibition of a daughter's inheriting from her father. In the Salic law, so called, there was a provision that "no part *of the salic land* shall pass to a woman;" but all land was not salic, or allodial, and this provision was later held to apply particularly to the lands of the crown, and hence to the crown itself, as we shall see. Under the feudal system, the fief was held on condition of military service, and each vassal, as a rule, must *servir son fief* [do the service of his fief] in person; but it was expressly stipulated that ecclesiastics, women, and children could perform this service by proxy, generally through a seneschal or baillie.

Though warlike churchmen not infrequently led their vassals in person,—witness the Bishop of Beauvais at the battle of Bouvines, "who shed no blood, though he brake many bones with his club,"—women appeared but rarely in the earlier time as Amazons, and then half in sport, as in the case of Queen Eleanor in the second Crusade.

But, however they chose to perform their duty in the *host* summoned by the sovereign's *ban général,* women were recognized as members of the feudal nobility. At the very top we find them, among the immediate great vassals of the crown, the *pairs de France.* We find, for example, Mathilde, or Mahault, Countess of Artois, sitting as a peer in the assembly which rendered judgment against the claims of her nephew, Robert, to the countship of Artois, in 1309; and the same countess receives a special summons to attend the court of peers in 1315; and in the next year, at the coronation of Philip V., she is among the peers who hold the crown over the king's head. This function was also performed by another Countess of Artois at the consecration of Charles V., in 1364.

In less exalted stations, too, women held fiefs, and there may frequently have been personal reasons for the suzerain's preferring female vassals. For first by custom, and then by written law (see the *Assises de Jérusalem* and the *Etablissements de Saint Louis*), the suzerain exercised a right of guardianship over his female vassals, maids or widows, as long as they were unmarried. In England very serious abuses followed from this right of wardship, as it was called, and the unfortunate French girls and children who were subjected to it were no better off than the English. We are not especially concerned here with the case of minor heirs under *garde-noble,* or ward, except where these heirs were girls. The girl so situated must not marry without the consent of the lord who held the

garde-noble of her person and of her domain. If she did so she was liable to fines and even to forfeiture of her fief; and this power was one which the feudal lords did not hesitate to exercise. We find Saint Louis objecting to the marriage of Jeanne, heiress of the county of Ponthieu, to the King of England, and to the marriage of the Countess of Flanders, widow of Count Ferrand, to Simon de Montfort, a vassal of the King of England. Both these instances show the reason which, in such a system as feudalism, underlay a power apparently so arbitrary; the suzerain, in mere self-defence, could not allow one of his fiefs to fall into the possession of a possible enemy.

There was another right, a corollary to this one. The lord could compel his female ward to marry in order that the military duties of the fief might be performed by a man. Saint Louis compelled Matilda of Flanders to marry Thomas, Prince of Savoy. The famous *Assises de Jérusalem,* organizing one of the most compact bodies which feudalism developed, to defend the Holy Sepulchre in the midst of hostile infidels, contains express provisions on this subject. According to this code, the baron could say to his female vassal: "Dame, you owe service of marriage." He then designated three suitable candidates, and she had to choose from among them. The regulations of the so-called *Etablissements de Saint Louis* on this subject are so interesting that we may give a paraphrase of a considerable portion of them. "When a lady becomes a widow, and is advanced in years, and has a daughter, the seigneur to whom she owes allegiance may come to her and say: 'Dame, I wish you to give me surety that you will not marry your daughter without my advice and consent, or without the advice and consent of her father's relatives; for she is the daughter of my liegeman, and therefore I do not wish her to be deprived of this advice.' Then it

behooves the lady to give him due surety. And when the girl shall be of marriageable age, if the lady find anyone who asks her in marriage, she must come before the seigneur and the relatives of the girl's father and say to them: 'Sire, my daughter is asked in marriage, and I will not give her without your consent, nor should I do so. Now give me your good and faithful counsel; for a certain man has asked for her' (and she must give his name). And if the seigneur say: 'I do not wish this man to have her, for so-and-so, who is richer and of better rank than the one you have named, has asked me for her, and will take her willingly' (and he shall name the man); or if the relatives on the father's side say: 'We know a richer and a better man than either of those you have named to us' (and they shall name him); then shall they deliberate and choose the best of the three and the one most advantageous to the demoiselle. And he who is chosen as the best should be really thought so, for no one should make a mockery of law. And if the lady marry her daughter without the consent of her seigneur and of the relatives on the father's side, after she had been forbidden to do so, she shall lose her movable goods," on which the seigneur is given the power of distraint. There is in this enactment elaborate provision for satisfying everybody but the person one would think most interested—the young lady. Her consent to the arrangement was, to the mediæval mind, a matter of small moment.

The powers thus given to the seigneur by formal law were certainly exercised by right of custom, and probably with far less restraint of justice than that provided for in the *Etablissements*. For caprice, tyranny, or avarice might be satisfied by forcing an unfortunate ward into marriage. Frequently, the unscrupulous baron forced his ward to marry the highest bidder, or proposed some absolutely

impossible candidate for her hand merely to have her buy her freedom. "You will either marry this decrepit old knight, to whose rank and wealth you cannot reasonably object, or you will pay me so much." We can well imagine that the impulse of youth would suggest surrender of almost any worldly wealth to have "freedom in her love." The romances are full of incidents akin to this, where the authority of either father or guardian was exerted in vain; and the romances, however fantastic in some respects, are but the reflections of actual conditions.

The unmarried woman, whether princess or mere demoiselle, was in a condition almost as dependent as the serf. If she did not choose to marry, or if her face or her fortune could not tempt anyone to ask her in marriage, she might enter a monastery. Indeed, a father unwilling or unable to provide a suitable dower for her might force her to become a nun. The eldest son must be provided for first. If the patrimony were small and the family large, younger sons had to fend for themselves, and daughters had to take what they could get. The convent was the cheapest and the safest place in which to establish them.

Yet in the age of feudalism there were certain safeguards for women, whether these were altogether of feudal origin or merely survivals of homely, common-sense custom. To cite but a few examples, we find in the *Assises de Jérusalem* most stringent provisions for the punishment of seduction or crimes of violence against women. The statute provides that the seducer, if he be able to do so and is approved by the parents, shall marry the girl. In another connection, we learn that in Paris it was for a while customary to marry such a couple, whether they would or not, in the obscure little church of Sainte-Marine, and with a ring of straw as a symbol of their shame. In case marriage was not acceptable to the parents of the

girl, the seducer might provide for her suitably in a convent, and he himself might be punished by mutilation, confiscation of his goods, and banishment. The husband had to secure to his wife a certain proportion of, if not all, her dowry, and in the book of the customs of Anjou we find it definitely stated that: *Il est usage que gentil home puit doer sa fame a porte de mostier dou tierz de sa terre* [It is the custom for a gentleman to endow his wife with the third of his goods at the church door]. Then, to protect widows from oppressive feudal reliefs, as they were called, the *Etablissements de Saint Louis* ordain that "no lady shall pay a redemption fee (to secure succession to the fief), except in case she marry. But if she marry, her husband shall pay the fee to the seigneur whose vassal she is. And if what is offered does not please the seigneur, he can claim but the revenues of the fief for one year."

Once admitted to the recognized class of the nobility, either as a wife or as one of the greater vassals, a woman's position was decidedly improved. Her rights were not many, but yet the feudal châtelaine occupied a position of some dignity and importance. She was regarded as in some sort the representative of her husband during his presence as well as during his absence. The *Assises de Jérusalem* provide, among other things, that she shall not be proceeded against in court as the representative of her husband until a respite of a year and a day has elapsed, to allow for his possible return; and in the château, at all times the lady had charge of domestic affairs, and on state occasions shared the dignity of her husband.

The feudal château of a great baron was not only a fortress to secure him against his enemies; it was also a home for his family and for scores of dependents and retainers, and frequently a hostelry for the entertainment of travellers of high and low degree. The moat, the

drawbridge and portcullis, the strong walls pierced with narrow slits to admit scant light and air in time of peace and to deliver arrows in time of war, the battlements, and the lofty tower of strength,—all these are familiar in our conceptions of the feudal castle. Many of us have followed Marmion in his mad dash under the descending portcullis and across the drawbridge of Lord Angus's castle; and we have watched the arrows flying against the walls of Front de Bœuf's donjon and old mad Ursula raving on its battlements. But the other features of the dwellings, though sometimes described with equal care by the great Sir Walter and his disciples, attract less attention and fade sooner from our memories. Such a manor hall as that of Cedric the Saxon should be kept in mind if we wish to get a fair idea of the actual life of the better classes, not only in England but in France, for the main features of the architecture and of the furnishings were the same. The nature and extent of the fortifications might vary greatly, according to the power or ambition of the owner; but the domestic arrangements of the feudal home would be substantially the same in all.

The main portion of the house was given up to a huge hall. Entering the gateway of the outer wall, one found one's self in a court, around which were ranged the great hall, the smaller sleeping apartments, the domestic offices, and the stables. Every possible provision was made for men and animals to live within the enclosure in case of siege. The great hall itself was usually at least thirty or forty feet in length, and often so wide that its high, vaulted roof had to be supported on a row of columns extending down the middle. In the ceiling was a hole, or *louvre*, to allow the smoke to escape when fire was lighted on the hearth in the centre of the floor—for chimneys were used as yet, if at all, only in the smaller rooms. At one end of

the hall there was probably a slightly elevated dais, or platform, on which were the seats for the lord and lady, and perhaps for distinguished guests. In the tall ogival windows, which were glazed only in the houses of the very wealthy, were window seats, and along the rude board or table in the body of the hall were rough benches and stools for the retainers and guests of lesser rank. And if the lord were rich, there would be a gallery, at the opposite end from the dais, for the minstrels who played during banquets. Armorial bearings and weapons and armor hung upon the walls. If the roof were so broad as to require the support of pillars, these and the arches of the roof were decorated with carving. Sometimes a further effect of color might be added by tapestries upon the walls, and sometimes, though rarely, by mural paintings, as we are told in the lay of *Guingamor:*

> "La chambre est paint tut entur;
> Venus, la devesse d'amur,
> Fu tres bein en la paintur."

[The room is painted all about; Venus, the goddess of Love, was beautifully pictured in the painting.]

The floor of the hall might be of wood, though at the early period of which we write it was very commonly of earth. There were no carpets, except in palaces of great luxury, even at a much later date; instead, the floor was covered with rushes or straw. Straw was anciently one of the symbols of investiture; in the Salic law the person conveying an estate cast a wisp of straw into the bosom of him to whom the property was to be conveyed. With this custom in mind, we can understand the anecdote told by Albéric des Troisfontaines of William the Conqueror. The floor of the room in which he was born was covered with straw. The newborn child, having been placed on the floor for a moment, seized in his tiny hands a bit of the straw,

which he held vigorously. *"Parfoi!"* cried the midwife, *"cet enfant commence jeune à conquérir."* Obviously, the anecdote, with its allusion to the Conquest, was made up long after the event, but it serves to show that even in the mansions of the well to do straw was the usual floor covering; and even much later we do not find the old coverings of rushes, branches, or straw displaced by carpets. In 1373 the inhabitants of a certain town (Aubervilliers) were exempted from a feudal tax on condition of their furnishing annually forty cartloads of straw to the *hôtel*, or palace, of Charles V., twenty to that of the queen, and ten to that of the dauphin. On special occasions the ordinary straw might be displaced by fresh green boughs upon the floor and against the walls. Froissart tells us that on a very warm day "the count of Foix entered his chamber and found it all strewn with verdure and full of fresh new boughs; the walls all about were covered with green boughs to make the room more fresh and fragrant. . . . When he felt himself in this fresh new chamber, he said: 'This greenery refreshes me greatly, for assuredly this has been a hot day.'" When the rushes or straw remained long on the floor without being renewed, as was assuredly often the case, trampled on by men and used as a couch by the dogs of the establishment, the effect must have been quite other than refreshing. This must have been the case in many a private house, but especially in such public places as the great churches and the great university of the Sorbonne, whose students sat on the floor upon straw, and had to pay twenty-five sous each to the chancellor for furnishing it.

In the hall of the castle thus rudely furnished the inmates lived a large part of their lives. There the household assembled for meals. There the minstrel, if one

chanced to be present, recited his romance. There the lord in person, or his seneschal or baillie, held his court to administer justice. It was the common room of the house, and usually contained all there was in the way of decoration. Comfort even here was hardly to be found; one can fancy that the fire on the open hearth gave out more smoke than heat, and the windows, often entirely unglazed and ill-fitting, let in more cold than light.

The smaller apartments were even less pretentious in the way of comfort. Opening out of the hall, or arranged around the court, were little cubby-holes of places to serve as sleeping apartments. The furniture in them was of the simplest description, and one was not even sure of finding a bedstead; for unless the occupant were outrageously affected by what the old folks doubtless called the degenerate effeminacy of the age—in the year 1000—his bed was apt to be made on the floor, or in a bunk against the wall. Sometimes there was a larger apartment opening from the rear of the hall and destined for the private use of the lord and his lady. As luxury increased, this apartment gradually became better furnished, and at length there developed the lady's bower, where she might retire with her maids. Of these there would often be a goodly number, some mere domestics, some young girls of good family sent to learn polite manners and domestic arts under the lady of the castle. In the bower also tapestries would be hung on the walls, and, in place of arms, perhaps there would be the various musical instruments in popular use, particularly the harp, in various forms, known as *psaltérions, cythares, décacordes;* the rote, which was what we should now call a viol; various forms of violins, such as the rebec and the lute; guitars; and perhaps flutes. The use of these instruments was, of course, not unknown to the ladies themselves, and we find many references in the

romances to maidens at the courts playing upon the harp and singing, though the professional minstrel or the page in training was oftener the performer.

In the bower, the lady was not occupied with mere amusements. We are apt to forget that our more complex civilization has taught us to rely upon others to do many things which even our great-grandmothers had to do for themselves. Placed in the position of Robinson Crusoe, even with the help of the simple tools which Defoe allows him to have, how helpless would be the average man of to-day, simply because, from long dependence on the little conveniences of modern life,—from lucifer matches and cooking stoves to ready-made clothing and ready-made houses,—he would have lost the use of the most elementary faculties. So the female Crusoe, in a feudal castle lone island, far from the conveniences of town and shops, must, if she expected to get any comfort for herself and those around her, know how to do innumerable small things that even the modern shopgirl finds done for her as a matter of course.

She must know how to make bread, without question. In the romance of King Florus a faithful wife disguises herself as a page and accompanies her husband without his recognizing her. They fall upon evil days, and the wife-page earns a living for herself and her master by starting a bakery and eventually an inn. The lady of the manor must not only know how to make the greater part of the clothing that she wears, but must know how to weave the cloth of which her gown is made, and to spin the yarn from which cloth and thread alike must come, and to card the wool or prepare the flax before that. If soap be considered necessary,—and there seems to have been no excessive use of it,—it would be wise for her to know how to make it, since there might be no place near by

where soap could be bought. Candles, too, of a rude sort, or some sort of rushlight, for domestic use, it would be well to know how to make; and, of course, she should know how to make cheeses and to cure meats for use during the long months when fresh meats might not be had. Even on the tables of the rich, salt meats were the staple article. Unable to provide for the feeding of large flocks through the winter—forage was scarce, root crops were little cultivated for stock, and the omnipotent potato had not yet come to its own,—the lord's steward would have a large number of animals slaughtered just at the beginning of winter, and the flesh of these had to be salted down. The good housewife would, of course, know something of the process. Though in large households the management of the male servants, the outdoor servants generally, fell to the steward or baillie, the lady even here undoubtedly had to give a general supervision, and had to provide work for and maintain discipline among the women of the household. It must have required no small amount of ability and tact, therefore, successfully to be the lady of the château.

We need not pause here to consider the amusements and the traditional occupations of women, such as fine sewing and embroidery, or music and the care of flowers. These can best be noticed when we examine the romances of a later age.

For women of the upper classes feudalism was not, we may say, entirely unjust or evil in its operations; but as feudalism meant oppression verging on slavery for Jacques Bonhomme, the peasant, his wife Jeanne could hardly have been in better case. With peasant marriages the seigneur could interfere even more tyrannically than with those of his feudal wards. In some places the bride and groom owed to the seigneur certain gifts called *mets de mariage*.

On the day of the wedding these "must be brought to the château by the bride, accompanied by musicians; the said *mets* shall consist of a leg of mutton, two fowls, two quarts of wine, four loaves of bread, four candles, and some salt, under pain of a fine of sixty sous." In some places that most infamous right known *par excellence* as the *droit du seigneur* was claimed, and we find a writer even as late as the seventeenth century recording the fact that the husband was sometimes required to purchase his bride's exemption from this right.

At the early date of which we write, however, there is little or no information to be had about the peasantry; the monkish chroniclers mention them but rarely, and then unsympathetically. Popular literature, with its *lais, contes, fabliaux,* or rude dramas in which Jacques and Jeanne appear, did not yet exist. We may, however, guess from the barbarity with which they were treated how near to that of the brutes was their condition.

About the year 997, soon after the death of the glorious Duke Robert the Fearless, the peasants of Normandy began to murmur against the wrongs they had to suffer. "The seigneurs," they said, "only do us harm; on account of them we have neither gain nor profit from our labor. Every day they take from us our work animals for feudal services. And then there are the laws, old and new, and pleas and lawsuits without end, about coinage, about forest rights, about roads, about milling our grain, about *hommage*. There are so many constables and bailiffs that we have not one hour of peace; every day they are pouncing down on us, seizing our goods, chasing us away from our land. There is no guarantee for us against the seigneurs and their men, and no contract holds good with them. Why do we allow ourselves to be treated thus, instead of trying to right our wrongs? Are we not men

as they are? Courage is all we need. Let us therefore bind ourselves together by an oath, swearing to sustain each other. And if they make war upon us, have we not, for one knight, thirty or even forty young peasants, active, and fit to fight with clubs, with pikes, with bows and arrows, yea, with stones if there be no better weapons? Let us learn how to resist the knights, and we shall be free to cut the trees, to hunt, to fish at our own sweet will; and we will do as we please upon the water, in the fields, and in the forests." They held secret meetings, and finally formed some sort of an organization. But the seigneurs got wind of their designs. The young Duke Richard sent for his uncle, Raoul, Count of Evreux. "Sire," said Raoul, "do not you stir a foot, but leave it all to me." He collected a force of knights and men at arms, and, informed by a spy of the meeting place of the peasants, bore down upon them suddenly and arrested all the ringleaders. Then came the punishment, the like of which was not uncommon, though the victims were more numerous than usual. Some were empaled outright; some were cooked before a slow fire; some were sprinkled with molten lead. Others had their eyes torn out, their hands cut off, their legs scorched; and of these victims the few who survived were sent back among their fellows to inspire terror.

One can well believe that these horrors and the ever present sight of those who had suffered from them kept the peasants in awe, as the old chroniclers exultantly tell us. The account as given in Wace's *Roman de Rou* has in our eyes a pathos and a poetic grandeur far greater than the chronicler's enthusiastic record of the deeds of the great Norman dukes. With us the democratic spirit, or mere humanity, is so much stronger than with him that we read his lines with feelings of pity and indignation

quite unforeseen by him. Is it not pitiful, this cry of the peasants?

> "Nus sumes homes cum il sunt,
> Tex membres avum cum il unt,
> Et altresi grant cors avum,
> Et altretant sofrir poum."

[We are men even as they are, we have limbs and bodies like theirs, and can suffer as much.] One hears the echo of Shylock's "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?" The feudal ages would have answered Jew and peasant alike with an emphatic "No!"

The barbarism in the suppression of this revolt is merely a typical instance of the prevailing cruelty of manners. It was not the peasant alone, regarded as hardly the same flesh and blood, to whom the seigneur was cruel. Let us look at a few of these famous knights, and first at the deeds of one notoriously wicked even in his own day. This was Foulques, surnamed Nerra, the black, Count of Anjou, and ancestor of the Plantagenet line. This same Foulques was twice married. His first wife, Elizabeth, accused of adultery—probably because he wished to get rid of her,—he disposed of by violent methods. One account reports that he had her burned alive; another, that he had her thrown over a precipice; and as she survived this, he, scandalized by her refusal to die in this more picturesque fashion, stabbed her himself. One is reminded of Nero, that most cheerful of the Roman murderer-emperors, who contrived an elaborate machine to drown his mother, and, when she swam ashore, was so irritated by the failure of his scheme that he had her summarily decapitated. Foulques's second wife was so ill used that she fled to the Holy Land. The pious count once burned down the church of Saint-Florent at Saumur,

calling out to the saint: "Let me burn your old church here, and I'll build you a far finer one in Angers." And later he did build a huge abbey, which no one of the neighboring bishops would consecrate; but a judicious application to Rome, backed by a present, brought a cardinal to consecrate it; and the wrath of Heaven was shown, says the chronicler, for the new church was destroyed by lightning. At length the devout Foulques, who had made two previous pilgrimages to the Holy Land, was so smitten by remorse that he undertook a third. When he arrived at Jerusalem he had himself tied to a hurdle and dragged through the streets, while two of his servants flogged him, and he cried out at every blow: "Have mercy, O Lord, on the perjured traitor, Foulques!" We are not told—but it is probable—that the servants who did the flogging either did not survive very long, or else were wise enough to flog very gently. Foulques, however, died on his way back from Jerusalem.

Then there is the story of the châtelaine of the magnificent castle of Ivri, Albérède, or Aubrée, wife of Raoul, Count of Evreux, half-brother of Richard I. She employed Lanfred, the most accomplished architect of the time, who had built the strong castle of Ponthiviers (about 1090), to build the castle of Ivri, stronger and more cunningly devised than any other. When he had finished, in order that he might build no better castle, or might not reveal the secrets of the fortifications of Ivri, she had his head cut off. But Count Raoul was a prudent man, and took the hint. He had Albérède executed too.

One Norman gentleman, Ascelin de Goël, having had the good luck to capture his feudal lord, held him for ransom; and in order that he might be encouraged to pay more, had him exposed at an open north window, in his shirt, and poured cold water over him, that the winter

winds might freeze it. And even the mild and saintly King Robert, in his war against the Duke of Burgundy, laid waste the country far and wide, massacred defenceless peasants, and did not spare even monasteries and churches, since peasants and monasteries alike were regarded as but the goods of the duke, which it was his right to destroy.

The Church had some redress for the evils suffered. The pious and superstitious king was tormented nearly all his life by the threats of eternal damnation which the Church held over him. This brings us to a consideration of the influence of the Church upon manners in general and upon the condition of women.

Though there were many ambitious, greedy, and cruel priests; though many of them lived in open defiance of the Church's prohibition of marriage among the clergy,—there were several married bishops at an earlier period, and one of these, the Bishop of Dole, actually plundered his church to dower his daughters,—the Church as a whole unquestionably stood for the best in manners and in morals. After Charlemagne's vain attempts to revive popular education, what learning there was existed only among the clergy. Though themselves forming part of the feudal nobility and holding fiefs for which they owed military service, the bishops, abbots, and priors almost always espoused the cause of the weak and the oppressed. Within the precincts of the church the poor fugitive from violence done in the name of justice was offered sanctuary, and the right of sanctuary was usually respected.

Within the walls of the monastery women were offered safety. There were many, of course, who might choose the quiet and the comparative ease of the cloister life from motives little better than worldly, and others who might enter with sentiments of romantic devoutness which it is hard for most of us to appreciate in this day; and both

were doubtless satisfied with what they found in the convent. But there were many others who had been forced into a life absolutely distasteful to them and alien to their temperaments. How many of these withered away in discontent! how many revolted more actively and led lives that brought reproach and disgrace upon the Church! Among the earliest of the satires against social abuses we find those against hypocritical, avaricious, gluttonous, or licentious monks and nuns; and the stream of satire runs throughout the Middle Ages. Monks live in the *pays de Cocagne,* to gain admittance to which one had to wallow seven years in filth; monks and nuns are in Rabelais's *Abbé de Thélème,* and *en leur reigle n'estoit que ceste clause: fais ce que vouldra;* and monks and nuns again play anything but edifying rôles in the *fabliaux* and their successors, the short tales such as one finds in the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles.*

Monasteries for women abounded all over France, most of them under some form of the Benedictine rule. Within their own monasteries women could govern themselves, though the whole convent was usually dependent upon male ecclesiastical control, either attached to a neighboring monastery, or under the jurisdiction of a bishop. In the great double monastic community of Fontevrault, established about 1100 by Robert d'Arbrissel, women were exalted above men; the nuns sang and prayed, the monks worked, and the entire establishment was under the guidance of the abbess.

The abbess or prioress occupied a position of responsibility and dignity not unlike that of the châtelaine. She too had the control of a large domestic establishment, and she was responsible not only for religious discipline but for the temporal provision for her nuns. The abbess had the power of a bishop within the limits of her convent,

and bore a crosier as the sign of her rank. She might even hold some feudal tenure in the name of her convent. She drew revenues from her holdings and was in every sense the executive head of her house. At first—always under some of the stricter rules—the abbess carried on business outside the convent through some male agent. Greater freedom undoubtedly prevailed at times, however, and the rule against her leaving the convent was ignored. She was in some cases appointed, but usually elected from among the nuns, though cases are found, of course, where the abbess was the mere creature of some powerful lay or ecclesiastical authority. To become abbess of a nunnery was not considered beneath even a princess of the blood; and in some convents probably the same caste distinctions were observed as prevailed outside, and the nuns were nothing more than elegant retired ladies of birth and fashion.

The abbess appointed her subordinates, who varied in number and rank according to the power of the convent. There was generally a sub-prioress, second in authority to the abbess, and certain minor executive officers, whose duties were nevertheless important, such as the chaplain, the sexton, and the cellaress. The chaplain was in most cases a monk chosen to celebrate Mass for the nuns, since women were not allowed to become actual priests; but in some cases the officer called the chaplain was a nun, whether or not she could officiate in all capacities. The sexton was a nun whose duties were to ring the bells for services, to keep in order the chapel, the altar, and the sacred vessels, and sometimes to act as a treasurer. The most interesting of these officers, however, and the one whose position must have been really most trying, was the cellaress. It was she who had general supervision of the commissariat. She was usually chosen upon the

LE DROIT DU SEIGNEUR

After the painting by Lucien Mélingue

As feudalism meant oppression verging on slavery for Jacques Bonhomme, the peasant, his wife Jeanne could hardly have been in better case. With peasant marriages the seigneur could interfere even more tyrannically than with those of his feudal wards. In some places the bride and groom owed to the seigneur certain gifts called mets de mariage. . . . *and that most infamous right known as the* droit du seigneur *was claimed, and we find a writer even as late as the seventeenth century recording the fact that the husband was sometimes required to purchase his bride's exemption from this right.*

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advice, if not by the election, of the whole community, and it was especially important that she should be a tactful person and a judicious manager. As housekeeper of the establishment, she had to control the servants and to satisfy the nuns. In providing food and drink for the household, she had to manage receipts and disbursements of considerable amounts. Very frequently a farm was attached to the nunnery, or there were several farms whose produce was to be used for the support of the institution. For whatever was bought or sold the cellaress had to make an accounting. With the proceeds of her sales or of the rent of the farms under her control, or with the money allowed her, she had to buy such provisions as were needed: grain, flesh, fish,—usually a very large item, especially in the Lenten season,—condiments, such as preserved fruits, spices, salt, etc., and, where the rule did not utterly forbid it, wine or ale. Of these details we shall speak more fully in connection with the rules for a model nunnery which Abélard wrote for Héloïse and upon which she based her government of the famous monastery of the Paraclete.

Aside from the protection they afforded to women who might otherwise have been utterly lost in the rough world, the monasteries were of great importance in other ways. Whatever it may have become during the period of the decline of monastic purity, the life in the nunneries, even in the comparatively dark period about the year 1000, was not an idle one. The day was carefully portioned off into periods of work, of religious devotion, and of leisure, which long custom fixed into a routine. The occupations included what we should now class chiefly as artistic work, though much of it was at the time really useful in a more homely way,—weaving of hangings and tapestries for the church, embroidery, painting and illuminating, and

copying of manuscripts. This last was, of course, work of the highest utility, though the artistic skill displayed in the writing itself and in the beautiful illuminations made it also an art. We have few names of actual scribes of either sex, since they rarely signed the manuscripts they copied; but among these few there are some of women. The magnificent tapestries, sometimes large enough to cover in one piece the side of a church, are perhaps the most noteworthy of the products of the monasteries. So famous was the work of the nuns in this particular that tradition assigned to them, though perhaps mistakenly, the production of one of the most famous historical authorities for the Norman Conquest, the Bayeux tapestries, said to have been wrought for Bishop Odo of Bayeux by nuns under the direction of Queen Matilda.

Most important of all in the activities of the convent was education. At the time of which we write, the standard of learning in the convents was higher than one would think, and higher than it was some centuries later; for Latin was still used familiarly among some of the women educated in convents. The most famous instance of learning is that of the Saxon nun Hrotsvith, or Roswitha, of the tenth century, who wrote legends of the saints, dramas on the model of the comedies of Terence, and chronicles. There were other learned nuns, though none famous in the French literature of the time, all of whom gained their knowledge in convents; for it was in convents alone that women could ordinarily receive any education at all. One of the main purposes of the convent was to train young girls. Sometimes there was only such training as would fit them to became novices and eventually nuns, and the degree of education was of course determined in part by social standing; that is, a princess would be more carefully trained than a mere demoiselle; but

some convents became famous schools, where education was given for its own sake, not merely to train those who meant to become nuns. In many cases, children of both sexes were taught, and girls and boys together learned Latin. In the romance of *Flore et Blancheflore*, the hero recalls how he and Blancheflore loved when they were children at school, "and told each other of our love in Latin, and none understood us." But the girls were probably better educated, in our sense of the word, than the boys; for teaching a boy to avoid breaking Priscian's head was then less necessary than teaching him to break that of his opponent in battle.

Leaving the convents out of the question, the Church helped the cause of woman and of humanity by its constant endeavor to repress violence. About the year 1030 France was afflicted by a succession of bad crops, resulting, together with the constant waste and ravages of petty wars, in the most frightful famine. The people in their misery became almost inhuman; men died in such multitudes that it was impossible to bury them, and the wolves fed on their flesh; human flesh was actually offered for sale in the market of Tournus; and one monster, near Macon, living as a hermit, enticed unwary travellers into his den and there slew and devoured them! When found out he had a pile of forty-eight human skulls, those of his victims. In the midst of this horrible state of affairs the bishops and abbots of all parts of France met in council and decreed punishment upon whoever should carry arms, and upon whoever should use violence against defenceless persons, merchants, monks, and women; not even the refuge of the altar was to protect him who disobeyed this decree. Raising their hands to heaven all those present cried out, *Pax! pax! pax!* in witness of the eternal peace compact, the *Paix de Dieu*—the Peace of God. Wars

had caused much of their distress, and the kingdom was indeed weary of war, but the millennium had not yet come,—philosophers still tell us that it is "just beyond the sky line,"—and the Peace of God was ineffective.

Failing to suppress war, the Church next sought, with more practical wisdom, to modify its horrors. In 1041 was proclaimed the *Trève de Dieu*—the Truce of God. All private feuds were to cease during the period from Wednesday evening to Monday morning, under penalty of fine, banishment, and exclusion from Christian communion. Then the days of the great feasts were included in the period of truce, as well as Advent and Lent. "Churches and unfortified cemeteries," says the chronicler Ranulph Glaber, "as well as the persons of all clerks and monks, provided they did not carry arms, were put under the perpetual protection of the Truce of God. For the future, when making war upon the seigneur, men were forbidden to kill, to mutilate, or to carry off as captives the poor people of the country, or to destroy maliciously implements of labor and crops." This last provision in particular is very interesting. Of course, powerful barons broke the truce again and again; but it was there as a real moral force of restraint, and the Church did not forget to contend for its observance, so that it must have had some effect. To no class in society could peace have been more welcome, more essential, than to women, always the sufferers in war.

We have left to the last one most important question in considering the moral influence of the Church. Surely, the sanctity of the marriage tie is one of the foundation stones of morality and of civilization; upon it rests the home, where woman has always found her greatest and surest happiness. The Church had been struggling for centuries, and was to struggle some time longer, to make

effective its opposition to marriage among the clergy. Among the secular priests, those not connected with a monastic order, marriage or concubinage had not by any means ceased, and we find even bishops leading scandalous lives. But the Church continued to fulminate its decrees, and the evil grew slowly less and less, till it existed only among the lower orders of the clergy and in out-of-the-way places. Monks and nuns alike took the three vows of poverty, of chastity, and of obedience. We are not concerned with the general question of whether or not priests should be married, or whether or not it is wisdom to force the observance of a vow of perpetual chastity upon young men and women who may have taken such a vow without duly considering their own temperaments, or who have been compelled to take it against their wills. Despite the scandals,—scandal has always a noisy tongue,—there should be no doubt that in the great majority of cases the vow of chastity was sincerely kept. Within its own limits the Church discouraged and was soon utterly to forbid marriage; what did it do to sanctify and to protect marriage outside of the ranks of the clergy?

Marriage was made one of the seven great sacraments of the Church, and the breach of the marriage tie was one of the sins most severely punished. Adultery had been severely punished under the customary laws of the Franks, usually by the death of both parties with frightful tortures; and the Church added to the physical punishment inflicted by the civil law in this world the threat of eternal torments in the next. Nevertheless, according to the testimony of many who are satirists and of some who are not, it was the unmarried priest who was the most frequent offender. An anecdote will illustrate the prevailing looseness of clerical morals. Wace tells us that a sacristan of Saint-Ouen, in Rouen, fell in love with a lady who lived across

the little river Robec. As he was stealing across to meet her one dark night, his foot slipped on the plank by which he was crossing the stream, and he tumbled therein and was drowned. A devil was just about to pitchfork his soul and carry it off when an angel appeared, contending that the sacristan had not yet committed the sin. The case was submitted to Duke Richard, who ordered that the soul should be returned to the body, and that he would then judge according to the sacristan's actions. Presto! it was done; and the monk, his ardor cooled by the ducking, went back to his abbey and confessed to the abbot. A popular proverb makes the story survive: "Sir monk, step lightly, and take good care when you cross the plank." Not only in the Church, but in the world, immorality was too common and too easily pardoned. It is significant that illegitimacy was the rule rather than the exception among the Norman dukes, and that William the Conqueror, himself illegitimate, was conspicuous in his age for marital fidelity.

The moral theory of the Church was correct enough, however it failed in practice. Every precaution was taken—indeed, too many were taken—to prevent hasty and ill-assorted marriages. The banns had to be read three times in the church; the contracting parties must be of proper age; they must have the consent of parent or guardian; they must not be related within the degrees prohibited by the Church; they must not be bound by any previous vow of chastity or be guilty of any mortal sin.

These provisions would seem to be in the main wise enough, and yet out of one of them grew a considerable moral evil. Divorce had been recognized by the Salic law: "Seeing that discord troubles their union, and that charity reigns not in it, N. and M., husband and wife, have agreed to separate and to leave each other free either

to retire to a monastery or to remarry," without question or opposition from either party. So ran one of the formulas; and as a sign of the divorce the keys of the house were taken from the wife, or a piece of linen was torn before her. The Church, however, opposed divorce, and declared it contrary to the spirit of Christianity. Yet, if one were wealthy or powerful, it was easy to have a marriage annulled, on one pretext or another. The most frequent was the plea for divorce for reasons of conscience, since the contracting parties, being within the prohibited degrees of relationship,—a fact which they had not known at the time of the marriage,—were guilty of incest in the eyes of the Church, and prayed to be relieved from the danger of perilling their immortal souls by deadly sin. Other pleas were resorted to, but this seems to have been a favorite one. By a subtile division of a hair "'twixt south and southwest side," this might be considered as not divorce, but the mere annulment of a contract which had been illegal and unsanctified from the start; and the distinction was an important one, since the rich noble or the monarch who had disposed of an objectionable wife in this way, and who had absolved himself by proper penances and by sufficient gifts to the Church, might, and generally did, remarry.

It is with the story of a divorce or forced separation that we are concerned in the case of Queen Bertha. Robert, the son of Hugues Capet, and the first real king of the Capetian line, was a devoted friend of Eudes, Count of Champagne and Blois, who proudly styles himself, in his charters, *Comes Ditissimus,*—richest count of France,—and whom Robert had honored with the title of count or seneschal of the royal palace. This Eudes had a beautiful and virtuous wife, Bertha, daughter of King Conrad the Pacific of Arles, and descended from the great Emperor

Henry, the Fowler. Robert, then married to a princess named Rosella, was godfather to one of the children of Eudes and his fair cousin Bertha. Both Princess Rosella and the Comes Ditissimus died. Bertha and Robert already loved each other, it would seem, since neither mourned very long. Within a few months they were married, in spite of the protests of Hugues Capet, who would have liked a more powerful alliance for his son and heir. Although Bertha and Robert were cousins, it was only in the fourth degree. This actual relationship, though within the proscribed degrees, would have been overlooked probably, as well as the spiritual relationship established by Robert's having stood godfather to one of Bertha's children, had it not been for the prince's ill luck in incurring the enmity of certain powerful and active churchmen. Archambaud, Archbishop of Tours, had issued a special dispensation, and had blessed the marriage in the presence and with the consent of several other bishops. But to understand fully the violent opposition which the marriage encountered from the papal party we must go back to an episode in the reign of Hugues Capet.

In the course of the last effort of Carl, the heir of the Carlovingian line, to recover dominion, the Archbishop of Rheims had betrayed Hugues Capet, and had agreed to introduce Carl's forces into Rheims. It was proved that this man, Arnoul, or Arnulph, had surrendered the keys of the city to the emissaries of Carl, and he himself confessed his guilt. Accordingly, with the sanction of an ecclesiastical court, Arnoul was deprived of his see, which was given to Gerbert, the tutor of the young King Robert. The papal party refused to recognize the jurisdiction of the court which had deposed Arnoul, and which still kept him imprisoned at Orléans, and a special legate was sent to France to protest against this action at the very time

of Robert's marriage to Bertha. The legate raised his voice in protest against the incestuous and sinful marriage. Thinking to appease him, Robert released Arnoul and restored him to his archbishopric; but to do this he had to depose Gerbert, and by so doing he made an enemy of one of the most active and able men in the Church, famous as a theologian, and afterward to become Pope Silvester II.

For a time, however, Bertha and Robert, who loved each other devotedly and lived in a simple piety quite in contrast to the licentious habits of the period, were left unmolested. The bribe to Rome was sufficient for the moment to purchase for them innocent happiness. Robert was most singularly devout, and was ranked almost as a saint by the ecclesiastical chroniclers who preserve his story for us. Though a handsome and well-formed man, and not altogether unfit for martial exercises, he delighted in pastimes rather befitting a monkish scholar than a soldier. He was gentle and kind to those about him, especially the poor and the unfortunate, and was devoted to music. He himself composed a number of Latin hymns for the Church, some of which are still retained, notably the sequence to the Holy Spirit, *Adsit nobis gratia,* and he set many others to tunes of his own composing. He was innocently vain of his powers as a musician and singer, and on a pilgrimage to Rome in after years, 1016, he deposited on the altar of Saint Peter his Latin poems set to music. The very graces and virtues for which his contemporaries praise Robert are the ones that make him manifestly out of place as King of France in the year 1000, and the misery of his domestic career is only more pitiful than the disorder which reigned in his kingdom. That one of the most pious kings of France should nevertheless have begun his career in opposition to the Church is very remarkable.

While Bertha and Robert were enjoying their brief respite from persecution, the papacy itself was struggling for existence. At last the Emperor Otho fought his way into Rome, seized the leader of the popular party, John Crescentius, "Senator and Consul of Rome," and pitched him over the walls of the castle of Saint Angelo. The unhappy Pope, John XVI. was replaced by the emperor's nominee, Gregory V. Almost as soon as Gregory was seated he summoned a council (998), in which Gerbert, now Robert's bitter enemy, sat as Bishop of Ravenna. This council, largely controlled by the vindictive Gerbert, threatened the kingdom of France with a universal interdict, suspending all religious rites but those of baptism and extreme unction, if Robert would not repudiate Bertha. The decree commanded "that King Robert, who has, contrary to the holy canons of the Church, married his cousin, Bertha, shall forsake her at once, and shall perform a penance of seven years, in accordance with the rules and customs of the Church. If he obey not, may he be anathema! And so also be it as regards Bertha! That Archambaud, Archbishop of Tours, who consecrated this incestuous union, and all the bishops who sanctioned it by their presence, be refused the Holy Communion until such time as they shall have come to Rome to make amends to the Holy See!"

One can imagine that, to a nature as devout as Robert's, such a curse was almost overwhelming. Yet he and Bertha endured for some time the horrors which this excommunication brought upon them, and Robert resisted with far more spirit than one would have supposed him to possess. The curse fell upon France, and upon its king and queen, who were surely no more morally guilty than their unfortunate subjects. Awful were the effects of the curse, according to Petrus Damianus, who records with

pious unction most of the signs and wonders with which the age was filled. All save a few of the lowest servants fled from the accursed presence of Robert and his queen, and even these menials, when they had prepared the king's food, deemed the very vessels from which he had eaten polluted by his touch, and purified them by fire or destroyed them. Bertha was reported to be a foul witch, and to have the foot of a goose, and was nicknamed *la reine pedauque*, or *pied d'oie* [Queen Goose-foot]. In her agitation and misery, the child she should have borne was prematurely brought forth. The charitable Damianus tells us that it was currently reported to be of monstrous form, having the head and neck of a swan and not of a human being.

Whether these horrors were direct effects of God's wrath or had birth in the zealous imagination of a writer whose interest it was to lay on the colors in his description of the blasting effects of excommunication, Robert and Bertha had to resign themselves to the cruel separation. Robert's superstitious fears were worked on by his monkish advisers, particularly Abbo, Abbot of Fleury, "who incessantly reprimanded the king, in public and in private." This holy man, says the biographer of Robert, "continued his reproaches until the good King acknowledged his fault and abandoned the wife whom it was not permitted him to possess." The separation seems to have taken place definitely about the year 1006, and Robert was to be miserable in his domestic life all the rest of his days.

He and Bertha had passed part of their married life together in the midst of a veritable reign of terror. All over Christendom the belief was general that the end of the world was at hand. The lurid prophecies of the Apocalypse were supplemented by texts believed to be prophetic of the Judgment Day, raked together from all parts

of the Scriptures and from what superstitious ignorance regarded as almost of equal authority, the Sibylline Leaves. Preachers took as their text the horrors of the approaching dissolution of the world, when, according to Revelations: "The stars of heaven fell unto the earth . . . and the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together;" or in the magnificent words of a hymn written long after: *Dies iræ, dies illa Solvet, sæclum in favilla: Teste David cum Sybilla.* [Day of wrath! O day of mourning! See fulfilled the prophet's warning! Heaven and earth in ashes burning!] They supplemented this picture by accounts of the torments of hell as reported in the legends of those who had been granted a vision of them. "Repent ye! repent ye! for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Woe unto him who in that day shall be found still a sinner!" There was naturally a paralysis of all useful activities. What was the use of preparing for the morrow, if there was to be no morrow? During the last year of the century the terror reached its highest point, and only absolute needs were attended to. There were great donations to the Lord on the part of tardy sinners who thought thus to purchase remission of their sins. But there were also those who refused to repent, and who resolved, since their life was to be short, to make it as merry as it could be. While the former crowded the churches, weeping and praying and surrendering themselves to the terrors suggested by the priest, the latter gave themselves up to the wildest dissipation. The year 1000 passed away, and still the stars were in heaven, and the wicked on earth began to breathe more freely; and when the next year went by without any Day of Judgment, courage revived, and the Church began to make use of the immense gifts which impulsive sinners had turned over to her. New cathedrals and new abbeys rose all over the land.

The pathos of the story of Bertha is heightened when we look at her successor on the throne. Even in her own day Constance, daughter of Guilhelm Taillefer, Count of Toulouse, was considered harsh and cruel; one chronicler euphemistically expresses this when he says: "There was as much constancy in her heart as in her name." She probably came by her nature honestly enough, for her mother was Arsinda, sister of that Foulques Nerra of cheerful memory, who, indeed, according to some accounts, forced the weak Robert to marry his niece. She was, says the chronicler, surnamed Candida on account of her excessive fairness, and is not infrequently called Blanche, the "fair queen." Into the rather primitive court of the French king, surrounded by his monks and probably longing for the banished Bertha, she came with a scandalous display of luxury and frivolity.

The south of France, in contact with Italy, with the cultured Moors of Spain, and, through its Mediterranean ports, with the most advanced civilization then known, that of the Arabs, was far in advance of the northern provinces in civilization, or at least in luxury and knowledge of the arts usually accompanying civilization. Provence, especially, with its ancient port of Marseilles to recall memories of the most cultured nation of antiquity, was in material prosperity and in arts already advancing to that stage of civilization which was to make her, in the course of the next century, the mother of the first real literature France had known and of the first extended protest against the Church of Rome. The troubadours were soon to make Provence and the Provençal tongue famous, and the Albigenses, with their heresy, were to invite the destruction of this gay, brilliant, but unsound society. The south was already far more gay and pleasure loving than the north, where the ravages of wars foreign and domestic had been

more terrible. And out of the south came Queen Constance, *la Blanche*, to a court where the king was more monk than king.

The northerners, always disliking the men of Provence, exclaimed in horror against the manners and the costume of the horde of Provençal attendants whom Constance brought with her. "The favor of the queen," says Glaber, "attracted into France and Bourgogne many natives of Aquitaine and Auvergne. These vain and frivolous men showed themselves to be as ill-regulated in their morals as they were immodest in their dress. Their armor and the furnishings of their horses were extraordinary. Their hair fell scarce to the middle of their heads [the fashion of shaving the back of the head was strange in northern France, though afterward so prevalent that William's Norman knights were reported by Harold's spies to be all shaven-crowned monks]; they shaved their beards off as smooth as play actors; they wore boots indecently turned up in long points at the toes, robes cut off short, reaching to the knees and divided behind and before; in walking they hopped along!" Alas for France! the French and the Burgundians, formerly the most honest and sober of all nations, eagerly followed the "sinful example" set by the queen's favorites. The whole nation copied these indecent costumes, and short hair, short robes, and sinfully pointed shoes became the fashion. As the Puritans inveighed against Babylonish apparel, the livery of the "scarlet woman," in the shape of Cavalier curls and long plumes, so the divines of France made a crusade against this livery of the devil. They declared that the finger of Satan was in all this, and that the pointed shoes would infallibly carry their wearers to the realm of the master whose livery they wore. One can hear the very voice of Ben Jonson's Ananias, the Puritan, as he testifies against

the costume of the Spaniard: "They are profane, lewd, superstitious, and idolatrous breeches."

Nevertheless, the satanic livery was never utterly thrown aside; and clothes were not the only things satanic about the new queen. Constance, high-tempered and energetic, reigned over France through or in spite of King Robert. Coming of a forceful and warlike race, she must have found many things distasteful in the weakness and superstition which were the chief traits she noted in her husband. She and her kinsfolk left him free to compose hymns, while they ruled France. But when one of his favorites, Hugues de Beauvais, whom he had made count of the palace, suggested to Robert that he might get rid of Constance and send for the ever-regretted Bertha, Constance notified her strenuous uncle Foulques. Foulques promptly despatched a dozen brave knights, with orders to slay Hugues whenever and wherever they found him: they found him and murdered him in the very presence of the king. Robert was too weak to resist effectively, made his peace with the queen, and gave himself up more and more to religious devotions.

He used to go to the church of Saint-Denis and sing with the choir and challenge the singers to a trial of skill. When Constance one day asked him to compose some song in her honor, he responded with a stave of his hymn: *O! Constantia martyrum* [O! faith and constancy of the martyrs], with which she was as well pleased as if the reference had not been a bit ambiguous. On a certain occasion, as he was besieging a castle on the feast of Saint Hippolytus, to whom he professed a special devotion, he left the army and repaired to Saint-Denis to sing hymns in honor of the saint. While he was thus engaged, the walls of the castle fell, and the king's troops entered in; a manifest reward for his singing *Agnus Dei, dona nobis pacem!*

While he was one day at prayers, shedding many tears, as was his wont, the vain and worldly-minded Constance adorned his lance with silver ornaments. The king, finding this sinful waste, looked out of his door and saw a poor man near by. He sent him off to get some sort of tool to cut off the decorations, shut himself up in a room with the fellow, stripped the lance of its silver gewgaws, and gave them to him, bidding him begone in haste lest the queen see him. Constance asked what had become of the silver, and Robert "swore by the Lord's name, though not in earnest," that he knew not what had become of it.

In spite of this pious perjury, we are told that Robert had a great horror of lying. The proof of this statement is very interesting. He had a reliquary made of crystal, set in a golden case, and containing no relic. Upon this his nobles, ignorant of the deceit, could swear without danger of risking their souls, in case the oath was false. And as common folk had souls, too, and might endanger them by false swearing, he had a similar reliquary, made of silver, in which was deposited nothing more sacred than an egg. He was constantly endeavoring to shield the petty malefactors whom his unworldliness had tempted to wrong-doing, and whom Constance would have punished. It was his habit to have the poor fed from his table, and on one occasion he had a fellow concealed under the table at his feet. The man found time between bites to cut off a heavy gold ornament attached to the king's knee. "What enemy of God, my good lord, has dishonored your gold-adorned robe?" cried Constance. "Undoubtedly," said Robert, "he who took it wanted it more than I, and with God's aid it will be of service to him." One day he saw a young clerk named Ogger steal a candlestick from the altar in his chapel. The priests were much disturbed over its loss; and the queen, in a rage, swore by the soul of

her father that she would have the eyes of the priests torn from their sockets if they did not account for what had been stolen from the sanctuary. The priests questioned Robert, who, denying all knowledge of the theft, at once sent for the thief. "Friend Ogger," said he, "haste thee hence, lest my inconstant Constancy eat thee up. What thou hast taken will be enough to carry thee to thy own country. The Lord be with thee." When the thief was beyond danger of pursuit, Robert cheerfully said: "Why all this pother about a candlestick? The Lord has given it to some of his poor."

One can well understand that however churchmen might commend this sort of meekness it was most irritating to Constance. She was full of energy and vigor, and never jested, says her biographer, about anything. She and her uncle Foulques, whom Robert had made governor of Paris, ruled France and fought against the turbulent and rebellious barons, chief among whom was Eudes II., Count of Blois, of Chartres, of Tours, and of Champagne, the son of the deposed queen, Bertha. She led in the first important attack upon heresy. Certain clerks in the city of Orléans developed a secret, heretical sect which gained many proselytes, among others a certain Etienne, who had been the confessor of Queen Constance. Their secret was discovered; they were brought to trial, refused to recant, and were ordered to execution. As they marched from the church where they had been tried to the immense funeral pyre, they passed Constance in the porch of the church. Recognizing Etienne among the thirteen prisoners, she attacked him furiously, and with a whip put out one eye of the defenceless victim. This vindictive queen, aggravating the tortures of the first victims of the new religious persecutions, is not a pleasant figure in French history.

As Robert grew older and it became necessary to determine on a successor,—the right of the oldest son was not yet altogether fixed,—Constance began to intrigue against her husband. Robert was in the habit of saying: "My hen pecks, but she gives me plenty of chickens." They had had six children; but had lost their eldest son, Hugues, in 1025. Of the three remaining sons, Eudes, the eldest, was an idiot; Henry, the second, was his father's choice; and Robert, the youngest, was favored by Constance, "with her habitual spirit of contradiction." She said, with some reason, that Henry was weak, inactive, deceitful, and negligent of affairs, and could no more be king than his father could; whereas Robert had far more energy and sense than his brothers. For once, the king resisted, and with the consent of the peers assured the succession to Henry. Constance fomented ill feeling between the two sons, and between Henry and his father. Robert, with the notion that injustice had been done him, was soon in revolt against his father. But the queen had always been so harsh to all her children that none of them seem to have had faith in her or affection for her, and the two brothers, Henry and Robert, soon became reconciled to each other and made a joint invasion of their father's dominions, pillaging his castles and territories. The poor king, after many ravages had been committed, at length bribed his sons to let him sing his last hymns in peace. Henry was to succeed to the throne, and Robert became Duke of Burgundy.

The peace thus made did not long outlast King Robert. He died in July, 1031, and the monks mourned their friend and protector, and many of the poor sincerely bewailed the loss of their "good father"; but there is no sign of any excessive grief on the part of Constance. She soon gave the kingdom cause to mourn in other fashion; for no

sooner was Henry I. seated on his throne than his mother began to stir up rebellion against him. She had always been violent in private as in public life, and treated Henry in particular "as if she hated him like a stepmother." Her intrigues now were so far successful that she won over to her side most of the direct vassals of the crown, and the greater number of the towns in the duchy of France declared themselves in favor of placing Robert, Duke of Burgundy, on the throne. By surrendering the county of Sens to her old enemy, Eudes, Count of Blois, Constance gained his aid. This plot of a mother against her son was successful in all but one main point: the other son, in whose name she was preparing to wage civil war, took no active part against his brother, and appears to have remained quietly in Burgundy. Perhaps he was wise enough to understand that what Constance was really scheming for was the continuance of her own power, and that if placed on the throne he would have been completely under her control.

In this crisis of the affairs of the kingdom, Henry, fleeing with a following of but twelve vavasours, called upon Normandy for aid; and most effective aid he had from one whose name was to become famous, a nucleus for the gathering of romance. This was Duke Robert of Normandy, surnamed Robert the Devil, who carried on a predatory warfare so savage and so successful that most of the revolted lords near the borders of Normandy "bowed their heads before him." Old Foulques Nerra, probably in one of his edifying fits of repentance, at length brought Constance to a reconciliation with Henry, reproaching her with the brutal fury with which she was treating her son. The miserable queen, who had caused so much unhappiness to her husband and to her sons, did not long survive the peace, dying at Melun in July, 1032.

Her ally Eudes continued the struggle some little while, but was at last vanquished and forced to disgorge half of the county of Sens which Constance had given him as a bribe.

Thus ends the life of one of the first of the French queens who really took an active part in affairs. Beautiful, witty, and full of graces and caprices essentially feminine, as well as of some masculine qualities, she yet appears to have inspired no love, nothing but dread, in anyone who came near her; and the chroniclers of the time seem to delight in telling anecdotes illustrative of her wickedness as contrasted with Robert's saintliness. But we must remember that at least she accomplished something, and that her enemies tell her story.

At the period of which we write, Normandy was all powerful, and the Capets had come to look upon her dukes now as their most dangerous foes and now as their most useful friends. Duke Robert the Magnificent, as his courtiers called him, or Robert the Devil, as literature knows him, had an amour which is interesting as showing that class distinctions were not so rigid as one might think. According to Wace's story of the romance:

> "A Faleize ont li Dus hante, . . .
> Une meschine i ont amee,
> Arlot ont nom, de burgeis nee."

[The duke did much frequent Falaise, . . . There he loved a girl named Arletta, born of a burgess of the town]. Arletta, the tanner's daughter, was to become a figure of romance in the story of Robert the Devil; but, romance or no romance, she was the mother of the greatest of the Norman dukes, William the Conqueror, born in 1028. William had hard work to keep his place in Normandy, but we cannot stop to tell of the long and successful struggle which he waged against the haughty barons who refused to bow to the illegitimate son of the

tanner's daughter. We all know the story of how the citizens of Alençon, which he was besieging, beat skins upon the walls of one of their redoubts, crying: "Work for the tanner!" and how William captured the redoubt, cut off the hands and feet of the unlucky jokers, and threw them over the town walls.

With a man of such temper, it is not unnatural that there should have arisen a curious story of his courtship, which began soon after this episode at Alençon. Engaged in constant conflict with his neighbors, William determined at least to secure the friendship of Flanders. He sought the hand of Matilda, daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders. Mauger, William's uncle, objected to the marriage, because Matilda and William were cousins, and caused the clergy to prohibit it. The Pope issued a special pronouncement against it. With him William could not proceed after the manner which doubtless most commended itself to him, but when the Italian Lanfranc, at the monastic school of Bec, dared to pronounce the marriage sinful, William promptly gave orders to burn down the farms from which the monks drew their sustenance, and to banish Lanfranc. But a shrewd display of courage and wit on Lanfranc's part made William his friend; and soon it was agreed that if William would found two monasteries the sin of his marriage would be forgiven him.

The chronicles of Tours report that Matilda herself objected to wedding the bastard of Normandy. The match, however, had been agreed to by her father, and William had set his heart on it. As proof of his determination, if not of his lover-like devotion, he waited for her as she came out of church one day, and whipped her till she consented to marry him! And as some writers assert, even after the marriage he continued to use this sort of suasion with his duchess, finally causing her death by his

brutality. Despite this unlovely beginning, the marriage was a happy one. Matilda was beautiful, virtuous, and of strong character, so that she won her husband's confidence and love. In an age of scandalous marital infidelity, he was faithful to her. She was his faithful friend and counsellor through life; and when he went on that perilous voyage of adventure to win the English crown, it was she who was left in charge of the duchy of Normandy; she who was praying for her husband's safety in the priory she had founded at Rouen, when she heard the news of the great victory of Hastings, and christened the church Bonne Nouvelle; she who welcomed him back to his capital of Rouen after the success in England.

The purity and devotion of the Conqueror's queen present a picture very different from that of Bertrade de Montfort, who, like the wicked Constance, was connected with the house of Anjou. Philip I., a pitiable *roi fainéant*, had married, in 1071, Bertha of Holland, by whom he had had three children. Having wearied of her, he sent her off to the château of Montreuil, prepared for her long before as a wedding bower, and then discovering one of those convenient relationships we have mentioned, succeeded in having his marriage annulled. Having thus relieved his conscience, it was but natural that he should begin to look about him—he may have looked before—for a wife whom he might keep for a while without distressing his conscience. He found this helpmeet in Bertrade de Montfort, with whom he fell in love while on a trip to Tours, in 1092. It is true that "a good man could find naught to admire in her but her beauty," and that her husband, another Foulques of Anjou, was still living. But these are small matters when one is King of France and has one's heart set upon some particular lady. Foulques was not an attractive man; he seems to have had something

like a club foot, and to have worn long, pointed shoes to hide his deformity; besides, he had already been twice divorced. Bertrade, young, beautiful, ambitious, was quite ready to go to the king and replace the unhappy Bertha. She eloped on the night following the king's visit to her husband, found an escort waiting for her at Meung-sur-Loire, and was conducted to Philip at Orléans.

Philip and Bertrade decided to get married, for the duchess was anxious to be called queen. They were indignant because most of the bishops suggested that the proceeding was rather irregular, since Foulques was not only still living but at that moment actually preparing to bring back his runaway spouse by force of arms. Nevertheless, by large gifts, the king persuaded one bishop to consecrate his union with Bertrade. Foulques and the friends of the deposed queen, Bertha, made forays into Philip's territory, but accomplished nothing. Meanwhile, Philip incited one of his barons to make war on and imprison the Bishop of Chartres, who had dared to denounce the marriage with Bertrade. The whole power of the Church was soon enlisted against him, and Pope Urban II. despatched a special legate to dissolve the marriage, or to excommunicate Philip if he did not leave his paramour. The Bishop of Chartres was promptly released, and Philip attempted to forestall further action on the part of his enemies by calling a special council at Rheims to try the bishop on a frivolous charge. But the legate summoned another council at Autun, which issued a decree of excommunication against Philip and Bertrade in October, 1094.

Though Queen Bertha was now dead, the ecclesiastical censure still held good. According to one of the conditions of the decree, Philip was to put off his crown. He obeyed this to the letter, refused to wear any insignia of royalty, and feigned to have ceased all intercourse with

Bertrade. The Pope gave him till All Saints' Day, 1095, to reform, being afraid to use extreme measures while a rival Pope, already sustained by the German Emperor, might entice the King of France into his following. All Saints' Day came and went, and still Philip and Bertrade were living as man and wife. Once more Philip was excommunicated, by a council held at Clermont; he again made fine promises of reformation, broke his word, and even had the audacity to have Bertrade consecrated as queen. Excommunication after excommunication was pronounced against him, and the kingdom was put under an interdict; he continued to make most generous promises about sending Bertrade back where she belonged, and still never did he do what he promised.

The terrors of excommunication had evidently lost their force, or else laymen and clerks alike were too much occupied with other important work before the council of Clermont, work whose effects were to influence profoundly the whole history of Europe and to bring about great social as well as great political changes: men were talking of the First Crusade. In the mighty stir of preparation, in the wild enthusiasm of that great movement, the king and his paramour were for the moment lost sight of. While men and women, and even children, were listening to the fierce eloquence of Peter the Hermit, and in inspired frenzy shouting out their approval: *Dieu le veult! Dieu le veult!* who could stop to think of the idle and shifty King of France? Were they not all going to battle in the service of a greater king than he?

Yet the motives of even these first Crusaders were in some cases far from that consistent purity which one would expect. Among the leaders is one Guilhelm, Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Poitiers, a gay and famous troubadour, who has founded in his own domain a *maison*

de plaisir where the inmates are dressed like nuns, a sort of Persian heaven ("A Persian's heaven is easily made— 'Tis but black eyes and lemonade"); who bids an affecting farewell "to brilliant tourneys, to grandeur and to riches, to all that enchained his heart, for he goes in the service of God to find remission for his sins;" and who yet carries with him on this holy war a perfect swarm of the beauties (*examina puellarum*) who enchained his heart, and continued to enchain it, probably, until they were captured by the Turks. But this Guilhelm gives a still more interesting proof of the motives of his pious warfare. Two papal legates came to Poitiers in November, 1100, to hold a council. Having preached the Crusade, they next proceeded to renew the curse of excommunication upon Philip, who was still living with Bertrade. The good Count Guilhelm, with the red cross already upon his breast, stirred up a mob against the legates, led the way into the church where the council was sitting, and encouraged his followers to stone the assembled bishops. There were broken heads, and there was some bloodshed, but enough of the bishops stood their ground to pronounce the excommunication once more.

Bertrade bore the censures with amazing effrontery, and jested about how the bells of the churches, silent during their stay, would begin to ring as they left a town; and she actually forced some priests to hold a service for her. But repeated curses, or the debauchery in which he had all his life indulged, seem to have undermined Philip's constitution. At any rate, he determined to relieve himself of the cares of government. In spite of the protests of Bertrade, who wished to prevent the power of the sceptre from going to the son of Queen Bertha, Philip, in 1100, associated his son Louis in the government of the kingdom.

The young man proved himself a vigorous ruler, and won the love of his subjects by attempts to punish some of the robber barons who made life miserable for merchants and travellers. He became too popular to be altogether agreeable to his amiable stepmother, who set about planning to get rid of him. Louis went to visit the English king, Henry Beauclerc, in 1102, and was received with all the courtesy and honor due his rank. Bertrade despatched after him letters, sealed with the royal seal of Philip, instructing Henry to seize Louis and confine him in prison for the rest of his days. But Henry was either too wise or too humane to perpetrate this outrage, and sent the young prince back with every honor. Louis was furious; Philip denied all knowledge of the infamous letters; and Louis, guessing whence they came, planned to kill Bertrade.

She, however, was not easily to be caught, and began devising means to procure the death of Louis. She first had resort to three clerks, who proposed to destroy the prince by means of sorcery, if they could conduct their incantations unmolested for nine days. But one of them confessed the plot, and the black art was abandoned for some surer method. The queen had Louis poisoned. He languished for several days, unable to eat or to sleep, and given over by the best physicians in France. At length, one who had learned some of the art of the Saracens volunteered his services; and under his care Louis's life was saved, though he bore traces of the poisoning all the rest of his days.

Queen Bertrade, like an affectionate mother, had hoped to see one of her own sons seated upon the throne, and was much grieved at Louis's recovery. Philip, completely under her influence, actually implored his son to forgive this second direct attempt upon his life; and Bertrade, in

a great fright now that her crime had failed and had been found out, cringed before Louis like a common servant, and at length won his forgiveness.

Philip determined to be reconciled to the Church. At a council held at the close of 1104 he appeared as a sincere penitent,—barefooted, with unkempt hair and beard,—and solemnly swore never to live with Bertrade again. The curse of excommunication was removed; the council discreetly went about its business; and Philip went outside, and put on his shoes, and had his hair cut, and put on his crown,—and had one ready for Bertrade, too. But the Church was tired of contending with him, and took no further notice of his irregularities, though what happened soon afterward was, if possible, more scandalous than all that had gone before.

Bertrade had the address to reconcile her two husbands; and in 1106 she and Philip actually went to visit Foulques, in Angers, where all three hobnobbed most amicably, sitting at the same table, or occupying seats of honor in the church, with Philip seated by Bertrade's side and Foulques on a stool at her feet. One can hardly credit a statement like this, but there seems to have been no limit to Bertrade's effrontery, and the complete subjection of Foulques is recorded in the Latin life of Louis the Fat: "Although he was banished outright from her bed, she so mollified him that . . . often sitting on a stool at her feet, he submitted in all things to her will."

Foulques, though he sat at the feet of his wife and the king's paramour, and though he ceased to make active claim to his share of Bertrade, has recorded his and his wife's infamy for us. One of his charters, for example, is dated thus: "This donation was made in the year one thousand and ninety-five after the incarnation of Our Lord, Urban being Pope, and France befouled by the adultery

of the infamous King Philip." But this was in the salad days of his wrath, before Bertrade had induced him to sit on a stool at her feet and submit to her will in all things.

In the year 1108, Philip, feeling his sins and his diseases lie heavy upon him, determined to take an allopathic dose of repentance to purify himself from the first before the second carried him off. He addressed special prayers to Saint Benedict, ordered that his wicked body should not be buried in the royal tombs at Saint-Denis, and clothed himself in the habit of a Benedictine monk. Thus he expired, having existed—not reigned—as king for forty-eight years, and was succeeded immediately by Louis the Fat, who was crowned within five days after the death of his father.

This haste was not altogether without excuse, for Bertrade was still alive, and not wasting her time in prayers to Saint Benedict. Taking advantage of the disturbed state of the kingdom, she managed to form a coalition, headed by her brother, Amauri de Montfort, and by the successor of her Angevin husband, to dethrone Louis and put in his place her own son, Philip, Count of Mantes. But Louis was too active to be caught as the conspirators had planned. He summoned Philip to appear before the court of peers of the duchy of France, and, on his refusal, seized upon the strongholds of his enemies before they were prepared, and deprived Philip of his county of Mantes.

Bertrade's last card was played, and she succumbed to her defeat. Though still in the height of her beauty, with not a wrinkle on her brow, she retired to the convent of Haute Bruyère, a dependency of the famous monastery of Fontevrault. Whether or not she was truly penitent for the evil life she had led we do not know. But there was to be short time left her for the cultivation of the monastic virtues; for the austerity of the new life soon wore her out, and she died in the convent.

Chapter II

Famous Lovers

II

FAMOUS LOVERS

IN Père Lachaise, the famous cemetery of Paris, there is none among the hundreds of monuments upon which the traveller looks with more interest than that of the lovely and unhappy Héloïse. There her body lies, with that of her lover-husband, Pierre Abélard. It is her story that we wish to tell; but her fame and that of Abélard are so intimately associated that one cannot tell of Héloïse without first telling something of Abélard. The debt to fame, however, is not all on her side; to translate the words of a great French historian: "Alone, the name of Abélard would be known to-day only to scholars: linked with the name of Héloïse, it is in every heart. Paris, above all, . . . has kept the memory of the immortal daughter of the Cité with exceptional and unchanging fidelity. The eighteenth century and the Revolution, so pitiless towards the Middle Ages, revived this tradition with the same ardor which led them to destroy so many other memories. The children of Rousseau's disciples still go in pilgrimage to the monument of this great saint of love, and each spring sees pious women placing fresh crowns of flowers upon the tomb in which the Revolution reunited the two lovers." We shall not, therefore, attempt to part those whom love has for more

than seven centuries joined together, and shall tell of Abélard as well as of Héloïse.

The great University of Paris was already famous in the twelfth century. Professors, most of them ecclesiastics, lectured on all the foolish subtilties of the learning of the day to crowds of students collected from every quarter of Europe. At the monastic school of Notre Dame the most distinguished lecturer on dialectic,—meaning philosophy and logic as applied to philosophy,—at the close of the eleventh century, was Guillaume de Champeaux. The method of instruction was, necessarily, almost entirely oral, for books were worth almost their weight in coin. It was the custom for the professor to encourage discussions with the students and to overwhelm them with the weight of his wisdom and the acuteness of his reasoning. In this fashion Guillaume had long triumphed, and had, we may fancy, acquired no little of that dogmatic habit of mind which is fostered by unchallenged teaching. About the year 1100 his ascendency was seriously threatened by a young Breton, scarcely yet a man, who had come to his school as a student and had had the temerity to overcome him in argument. This was Pierre Abélard, soon famous as a logician, philosopher, and theologian, now remembered chiefly because of his connection with the fair and noble Héloïse. Abélard was born at Pallet, or Palais, not far from Nantes. He was the eldest son of a family of some distinction, and his father, Bérenger, was determined to give his son an education in keeping with his own knightly rank. Bérenger himself was better educated than most of the gentlemen of his class, and there seems to have been a decided leaning to devoutness in the family, since both Bérenger and his wife, Lucie, took monastic vows later in life. At any rate, Pierre, after a taste of learning, determined to devote himself entirely to the

pursuit of knowledge. Let us see how he tells this part of his own story. "The progress that I made in learning attached me to its pursuit with an ever increasing ardor, and such was the charm that it exercised over my mind that, renouncing the glory of arms, my own heritage, my own privileges as eldest son, I abandoned forever the camp of Mars to take refuge in the bosom of Minerva. Preferring the art of dialectic to all the other teachings of philosophy, I exchanged the arms of war for those of logic, and sacrificed trophies of the battlefield for the joys of contest in argument. I took to travelling from province to province, going wherever I heard that the study of this art received special honor, and always engaging in argument, like a veritable emulator of the Peripatetics."

In this way, Abélard, still under twenty, came to the school of Guillaume de Champeaux. Received at first with honor, as an intelligent pupil, Abélard remained some time, perhaps two years. But his restless, inquisitive, and, above all, rational mind could not accept calmly what seemed to it untrue. Abélard, a mere boy, dared to dispute with his master, Guillaume, and, what is far worse, to get the better of arguments on Guillaume's own peculiar subject. The school was divided into two parties. Guillaume, being the more influential, prevented his pupil from establishing himself as a lecturer in Paris, and Abélard removed to Melun, at that time a royal residence and a city of some importance. Here he opened a school of his own, which prospered so greatly, in spite of the jealousy of Guillaume and the older teachers, that he removed to Corbeil, near Paris, and was soon recognized as more than the equal of his old instructor. But his health broke down under the strain; he retired to rest and recuperate in his native land, and remained there several years. Returning about 1108, he again met Guillaume in

argument, in the convent of Saint-Victor, outside Paris, and again vanquished him, this time so completely that Guillaume gave up his chair in Paris. His jealousy, however, still kept Abélard from establishing himself in the great city. The young philosopher opened his school on Mont Sainte-Geneviève, a hill just outside the walls of the Paris of that day, where he taught with brilliant success, till summoned to Brittany by his mother Lucie, then about to take the veil. On his return from this trip he determined to study theology. The venerable Anselm of Laon was the most distinguished teacher of theology, and to him Abélard went. Here is part of his comment on Anselm, which will help us to understand something of the writer's character.

"He enjoyed marvellous facility of speech, but his thought was without value, even without good sense. The fire that he kindled filled his house with smoke, but did not illuminate it. He was a tree dense with foliage and beautiful from afar, but found fruitless when examined more closely. I had come to him to gather fruit; I found in him the fig tree cursed by the Lord, or the old oak to which Lucan compares Pompey: But the shadow of a great name, the lofty oak in the midst of the fruitful field." With such an opinion of his preceptor, it is not surprising that Abélard grew impatient and talked imprudently. The immediate result was that the young scholar proved, to his own satisfaction and apparently to that of his hearers, that he could lecture on theology, as Anselm understood theology, by the aid of ordinary intelligence alone. The ultimate result was that he made an enemy of Anselm. He returned to Paris—about 1115—in triumph, was given the chair formerly held by Guillaume de Champeaux, and became a canon of the cathedral of Notre Dame.

During the three or four years that followed this signal triumph over his old master, Abélard enjoyed a popularity and a reputation for learning almost without parallel. He was of handsome presence, polished and winning in manners, accomplished even in the little arts and graces of the society of the period. All this would account for his personal popularity; but his was really a brilliant mind, fascinatingly if dangerously logical, and straightforward in dealing with vexed questions of philosophy and theology. And with all his learning he knew how to meet the difficulties of ordinary minds, to present his arguments in a style not only simple but lucid and entertaining. He brought to his work a precious quality—enthusiasm. From all parts of Europe students flocked to him, by hundreds, by thousands; and with the offerings they brought he was rich. Then it was that pride prepared his ruin. "Believing myself henceforth the only living philosopher, fancying that I had no more opposition to encounter or accusation to fear, I commenced to give rein to my passions, I who had always lived in the greatest continence. The more I advanced in the paths of philosophy and theology, the further I was getting, by my impure life, from philosophers and saints." How much of this confession is real humility, and how much mere pretence, exaggeration, and vain rhetoric, we cannot say. It is an unfortunate fact that what is recognized as the language of religion is so highly colored, so tropical, so manifestly not to be taken in its absolute and literal sense, that one cannot estimate a character by autobiographic testimony of this sort. What Rousseau meant when he confessed that he "gave rein to his passions" we know full well, for he tells us. What, or rather how much, Abélard means we cannot tell, since his language is evidently in large part figurative. We do not think, however, that he was ever really a libertine.

In his own account of his love story Abélard says that he was attracted by the beauty, the youth, and the mental attainments of Héloïse, the niece of Fulbert, a canon of Notre Dame, who had loved her tenderly and had educated her with unusual care. Smitten more by the physical than by the mental graces of the girl, then about eighteen, Abélard sought a pretext to ingratiate himself with Fulbert, and to enter his house as a lodger. The opportunity of having his beloved niece instructed by a person of such distinction was more than Fulbert could let pass. In the intimate relations of teacher and pupil Abélard also found his opportunity; and the two were soon plainly lovers in the eyes of all the world save Fulbert, who refused to believe in the treachery of his friend and the shame of his niece. Abélard, who was in his thirty-ninth year, loved with all the ardor of youth; he wrote passionate love songs, which were long popular but have been lost; he neglected his work, and devoted his time to Héloïse instead of to his lectures on theology. At last even Fulbert could no longer refuse to believe. The lovers were separated, but continued to meet in secret. Not long after the first discovery of their relations by her uncle, Héloïse found herself about to become a mother. Abélard stole her away one night, while Fulbert was absent, and fled with her to Brittany, where she remained with his sister until after the birth of her son, whom she named Astrolabe.

To appease Fulbert, who was thirsting for revenge but dared not pursue the pair into Brittany, the stronghold of Abélard's family, Abélard proposed to marry Héloïse, provided the union be kept secret, so as not to jeopardize his interests or prospects in the Church. Héloïse, devoted body and soul to Abélard, would not hear of a marriage which might ruin his career, and was with difficulty brought to consent even to a secret union. Fulbert, seeing

no other means of redress, accepted Abélard's proposition, and gave his word to keep the marriage a secret. Héloïse and Abélard secretly came back to Paris and were wedded a few days later, the ceremony being performed at dawn, in the presence of Fulbert and a few of his friends.

But the temporary disappearance from Paris of so noteworthy a person as Abélard could not be concealed. The whole town had known of his passion for Héloïse, and the gossips now guessed, no doubt, why he had disappeared, and why Héloïse also had gone. We do not need to be told that the surmises made, all so dishonorable to his niece, must have been galling in the extreme to Fulbert. He could not endure the shame of his niece, and tried to quell the scandal by letting the news of the marriage leak out. Abélard says that Fulbert told it himself, in violation of his oath of secrecy—for which we can hardly blame him as much as Abélard does. The devoted Héloïse, to protect Abélard, flatly denied the marriage; not all Fulbert's entreaties and threats could move her to admit that she was anything but Abélard's mistress. Beside himself with anger and shame, Fulbert grew so violent that Héloïse fled to a nunnery at Argenteuil, near Paris, Abélard aiding her in her flight. At Argenteuil Abélard had her dressed in the monastic habit, though she did not take the vows.

We must admit that there were some grounds for supposing, as Fulbert and his family believed, that Abélard meant to rid himself of his wife by having her shut up in the convent: and they had experienced enough of her self-sacrificing firmness to know that she would offer no resistance to Abélard's wishes, if such were his wishes. Determined at least to punish him, they bribed one of his servants, broke into his house at night, and inflicted upon him the most severe and brutal mutilation. If Héloïse

was forced to be a nun, Abélard should be fit for nothing but a monk.

The perpetrators of this Draconian vengeance fled. Paris was all agog with the shame of the brilliant philosopher. There were partisans in plenty on his side, and Abélard takes pleasure in telling us that two of the perpetrators of the crime, including his servant, were captured, blinded, and mutilated as he had been. The justice of the Middle Ages never erred on the side of mercy. Abélard fell into the most abject despair, but still we see in him the same dominant regard to his career in the world. When his friends came about him, particularly the clerks, with their lamentations and their manifestations of compassion, he says: "I suffered more from their compassion than from the pain of my wound; I felt my shame more than my actual mutilation." He felt not only the shame, but the ruin of all his ambitions. "In this state of hopelessness and of utter confusion it was, I admit, rather a feeling of shame than predilection for the vocation that impelled me towards the shades of a cloister." Ever ready to obey his wishes, Héloïse took the veil in the convent of Argenteuil at the same time that Abélard entered the abbey of Saint-Denis. Héloïse was not yet twenty; did her youthful heart, full of love of life, yearn for the cramped life of the nunnery? We shall later see what she herself says upon this score; for the present suffice it to note that even Abélard pauses in the account of his woes to praise her complete abnegation of self, and to tell us that she went to the altar where the irrevocable vows were to be taken, repeating in the midst of her sobs the lament of Cornelia: "O my husband, greatest of men! worthy of a bride far better than I! Had Fate such power over a head so illustrious? Wretch that I am, why did I wed thee only to bring woe upon thee? Be thou now

avenged in the sacrifice I so willingly make for thee!"—(Lucan, Pharsalia, VIII., l. 94.) The convent was to her a punishment; but as she goes to it she does not think of her punishment, but only of his.

Let us leave Héloïse for the present and pursue the story of Abélard. His troubles were just beginning; henceforth almost everything seemed to go wrong with him. Scarcely recovered from his injuries, he was besought by his former pupils to resume his lectures, while the monks of Saint-Denis, thinking to gain credit through their illustrious recruit, also urged him to teach again. These same monks Abélard had found far from congenial. They were covetous, narrow-minded, and outrageously licentious. He was, therefore, the more willing to undertake his old work, and opened a modest school at the little village of Maisoncelle, in Brie, where the monks of Saint-Denis had a priory. Here, once more, crowds came to hear him, and he felt so encouraged that he ventured to put in book form some of his theological and philosophical opinions, at the instance and for the use of his students. Neither misfortune nor the wish of Job that his adversary had written a book had taught him caution; in his book, probably the *Introductio ad Theologiam* that has come down to us, he ventured to discuss even the most obscure and jealously guarded mysteries of the faith, and to discuss them with the same lucidity, directness, and acuteness of reason that had made him famous as a lecturer. He was, indeed, in the habit of acting upon one of the phrases which one may cull from his writings as characteristic of the man's mental attitude: "Understand, that you may believe." Abélard found, like hundreds of others who have proceeded in this way, that his reason could not account, to its own satisfaction, for all the things called of faith. He was constantly allowing himself to

be led on in discussion until he found himself confronted with a dilemma: either to follow logic still further and end in infidelity, or to silence, as best he could, the voice of reason by an appeal to authority and to faith. On the present occasion it was an utterance on the dogma of the Trinity that his enemies seized upon. The leaders of the persecution were two former classmates, who now intrigued against him. Without examining him, without giving him a chance to discuss, justify, or explain his doctrine, a council, assembled at Soissons in 1121, condemned his book, not so much for what it taught, as because the author had presumed to teach theology without definite authority from the Church. Summoned before the council—the decision had been reached and the trial conducted without his presence—Abélard was forced to throw his book into the flames. As a confession of faith he was made to recite the Athanasian creed, and, to humiliate him still further, they brought him the text, as if he could not recite from memory that which was known by every child. The man's overwrought nature gave way under this last exhibition of petty malice. He tells us: "I read [the creed] as well as I could for sobs and tears." He was then delivered to the abbot of Saint-Médard to be confined to the monastery for an indefinite period.

He soon obtained permission to return to Saint-Denis, but here his tongue once more got him into trouble. The patron saint of the abbey, the patron saint of all France, was Saint Denis, whom the ignorant monks of the abbey, jealous of the dignity of their patron, identified with Dionysius the Areopagite, the convert of Saint Paul. Abélard pointed out to them a passage in Bede which proved the whole thing a legend. Abélard was perfectly right, but in the eyes of his brother monks he was certainly a traitor, probably an emissary of the devil. His life at Saint-Denis

becoming unbearable, he fled at night to Champagne, and, after some little opposition, was permitted to retire to a desert place not far from Troyes. Here he built an oratory of reeds and thatch, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and here he dwelt as a hermit. But even here pupils sought him out. To gain his living, he opened a school; and the desert gave birth to scores of little huts and tents, in which his eager hearers lived. His own little oratory being too small to accommodate the crowds, the students built for him a new and larger temple, which, in gratitude for the consolation he had found here, he dedicated to the Trinity and named Paraclete, in honor of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

But he was tormented by new dangers, or at least by new fears. A nature so hypersensitive perhaps conjured up hobgoblins of persecution out of pure imagination. "I could not hear of an assemblage of churchmen without thinking that its object was to condemn me." He even cherished the idea of flying from Christendom, to live among the infidels. When the abbacy of Saint-Gildas de Rhuys, a remote place on the coast of Brittany, was offered to him, he hastened to accept, thinking that if he gave up teaching the persecution would cease. This was about 1128, and for nearly ten years Abélard struggled on there. It was a struggle, for he found the monks not only undisciplined, and given to licentious pleasures, but positively criminal. One gets a picture of the abbot and the abbey in Longfellow's *Golden Legend*, where Lucifer, in the guise of a monk, gets into the refectory of the convent of Hirschau and tells the monks how much more delightful is life in his own abbey of Saint-Gildas de Rhuys:

> From the gray rocks of Morbihan
> It overlooks the angry sea;
> The very sea-shore where,
> In his great despair,

Abbot Abelard walked to and fro,
Filling the night with woe,
And wailing aloud to the merciless seas
The name of his sweet Héloïse!
Whilst overhead
The convent windows gleamed as red
As the fiery eyes of the monks within,
Who with jovial din
Gave themselves up to all kinds of sin! . . .
Abelard! . . .
He was a dry old fellow. . . .
There he stood,
Lowering at us in sullen mood,
As if he had come into Brittany
Just to reform our brotherhood! . . .
Well, it finally came to pass
That, half in fun and half in malice,
One Sunday at Mass
We put some poison into the chalice.
But, either by accident or design,
Peter Abelard kept away
From the chapel that day,
And a poor, young friar, who in his stead
Drank the sacramental wine,
Fell on the steps of the altar, dead!

The facts here presented are essentially the same as those vouched for by Abélard himself, even to the poisoning of the young monk. There were two attempts of this kind, and the wicked monks also hired assassins to waylay their abbot, who lived in constant terror of his life. He strove to control his monks by every sort of means, but at length was forced to fly to the protection of a friend in Brittany. He did not definitely abandon his abbey for some time, probably not before 1138; but his regular connection with it ceased some years earlier.

The years of his struggle with the monks of St. Gildas were not without their periods of relief. In the midst of his selfish preoccupation with his own tribulations his thoughts were distracted by solicitude for Héloïse. Héloïse,

in the nunnery of Argenteuil, had led a life so exemplary that she had won universal esteem. But it happened, says Abélard, "that the Abbot of Saint-Denis had claimed, as a dependency formerly subject to his jurisdiction, the Abbey of Argenteuil, in which my sister in Christ, rather than my spouse, had taken the veil. Having obtained possession, he expelled the congregation of nuns, of whom my companion was prioress." When this happened Abélard bestirred himself to provide for Héloïse and her nuns, and at the same time to provide for the maintenance of religious services in his old temple of the Paraclete. He returned thither, and invited the nuns to come. He donated to them the oratory and its dependencies, and Pope Innocent II. confirmed the donation to them and to their successors forever. For some time Héloïse and her nuns endured great privations, for the Paraclete, after its abandonment by Abélard, had relapsed into the condition of a wilderness; "but," continues Abélard, "for them, too, the Lord, showing himself in very truth the Comforter, touched with pity and good-will the hearts of the people in the neighborhood. In one single year . . . the fruits of the earth multiplied around them more than I could have made them do had I lived a century . . . The Lord granted that our dear sister, who directed the community, should find favor in the eyes of all men: bishops cherished her as their daughter, abbots as their sister, laymen as their mother; all admired equally her piety, her wisdom, and her incomparably sweet patience."

It has been doubted by some biographers whether Héloïse ever saw her lover after she took the veil. His language in the passage just quoted as well as that in the following would seem to leave no room for doubt that they met frequently at this time: "All their neighbors blamed

me for not doing all that I could, all that I ought, to help them in their misery, when the thing would have been so easy for me to do, by preaching. Accordingly I made them more frequent visits, in order to work for their good." The voice of calumny, he continues, would not even yet be still; but, in spite of evil tongues, "I was resolved to do my best to take care of my sisters of the Paraclete, to administer their affairs for them, to increase their respect by my very bodily presence in such a way as to give me, at the same time, a better opportunity to look out for their wants." When or how often he visited the Paraclete we do not know; but in some of these visits Héloïse and Abélard must have met again.

While visiting a friend, during one of his enforced flights from Saint-Gildas, Abélard wrote the history of his woes, *Historia Calamitatum*, to which we owe most of the details given previously. This work, in the form of a letter, is addressed to a friend whose name we do not know. Abélard calls him "my old friend and very dear brother in Christ, my intimate companion," so that it is at least certain that he was a clerk. It may have been that this letter was meant for Peter the Venerable, who afterward showed himself a devoted friend to Abélard as well as to Héloïse. But to whomsoever the letter was written, it came into the hands of her who had sacrificed so much for the writer. All the old love awoke in Héloïse's heart when chance threw in her way the story, in Abélard's own hand, of their misfortunes. Moved beyond her powers of repression, her feelings overflowed in a beautiful letter to her lost husband. In all the literature of love there is nothing finer than this letter, either for passion or for tenderness and pathos. It is no wonder that Abélard replied, as she besought him to do. A sort of correspondence was opened; she wrote three letters in all, and he four. The actual

text of these letters is in a Latin manuscript of a date one hundred years later than the time of Héloïse. The preservation of such a series of letters has seemed to some investigators improbable, but there is every reason to believe that Héloïse herself would have collected and preserved with the greatest care a correspondence so precious to her. That the letters excited the highest admiration from the very first we have ample proof, for one of the authors of the *Romance of the Rose,* Jean Clopinel, translated them as early as 1285. In the fifteenth century they were printed, and since then numberless translations, imitations, and perversions have appeared. We need feel no doubt, therefore, that we are reading an actual love letter, dating from about 1135, when we follow the glowing lines addressed to Abélard by Héloïse.

There is naturally a marked difference in the tone of the letters, due to a difference of character and to different environment. While passages in the first letter of Héloïse are almost lyric in their intensity, like the words of a Juliet, at times almost of a Sappho, the reply from Abélard is apparently cold in many places, certainly constrained, only occasionally throbbing an answer to the touch of her whom he had loved. As we shall have some very unfavorable things to say of Abélard's character in general, it seems but fair to say that this constraint and evident desire to suppress the violence of Héloïse's love and to direct her thoughts to the duties of her calling cannot be charged against him as a fault. Not one of his replies shows lack of affection. In justice to him we may say that he was seeking to teach her resignation; to divert her thoughts from the past, where was only storm and shipwreck in their brief love.

It is pleasant to believe that, when he wrote these letters, Abélard was in some sort aware of and repentant

for the great wrong he had done. There was never a more disgustingly deliberate and inhumanly selfish seduction than that of Héloïse by Abélard. He was by nature excessively vain of his personal appearance no less than of his attainments. We have seen how he speaks of Anselm; in the same tone, in the same florid, turgid, pedantic style he was constantly boasting of his achievements. Having won all the laurels available in the intellectual world, he sought new experiences. It has been remarked, not inaptly, that this sudden awakening of the man in the scholar is a reproduction of the Faust legend with living actors. As the scholar, Faust, bent with age and labors, is suddenly transformed into the youthful, ardent, and selfish lover, so Abélard's long dormant passions transform him. But his real nature is not altered; he is always fundamentally selfish. The very terms in which he relates his first feelings toward Héloïse are almost brutal. He praises the unusual extent of her knowledge, an attraction of special force for him; and then, "physically, too, she was not bad." While he condescends to allow that Héloïse was "not bad" as regards looks, it is quite another tale with regard to himself: "Seeing her adorned with all the charms that attract lovers, I thought to enter into a liaison with her, and I felt sure that nothing would be easier than to succeed in this design. I enjoyed such reputation, and had so much grace of youth and good looks, that I thought I should have no rebuff to fear, whoever might be the woman whom I should honor with my love."

All through the man's career one finds the same exaggerated self-esteem, the same preoccupation with his own selfish interests. He positively chuckles over the perfect success of his ruse to deceive Fulbert. "Fulbert was fond of his money. Add to this the fact that he was eager to

procure for his niece all possible advantages in belles-lettres. By flattering these two passions, I easily won his consent, and obtained what I desired. . . . He urged me to devote to her education all of my spare time, by day as well as by night, and not to fear to punish her should I find her at fault. I wondered at his naïveté! . . . Entrusting her to me not only for instruction but for chastisement, what was this but allowing full licence to my desires and furnishing me, even against my will, with the opportunity of conquering by blows and threats if caresses should be unavailing?" When he has ruined this niece, of whom Fulbert was so proud, a moment of apparent remorse comes to him as he witnesses the old man's distress: "I promised him any reparation which it might please him to demand; I protested that what I had done would surprise no one who had ever felt the violence of love and who knew into what abysses women had, since the very beginning of the world, plunged the greatest men. To appease him still further, I offered him a sort of atonement *far greater than anything he could have hoped: I proposed to marry her whom I had seduced, on condition only that the marriage be kept secret, so as not to injure my reputation.*" The italics are ours; they can but faintly indicate our astonishment at the impudence no less than the selfishness of this piece of condescension. This passage is followed by four pages devoted to pedantic arguments, enforced by appeal to historic cases, seeking to prove how prejudicial a thing marriage is to holy men, to wise men, to great men, and that therefore it must be so to Abélard. All this argument he ascribes to Héloïse, who implored him not to marry her; but the tone is his own; there is never a thought of what it may mean for her, only for himself. In the same way, after Fulbert has taken vengeance on him, in two pages of lamentations

over his fate there is not one word of pity for the grief of the woman who had given all to him. It is: How shall I appear in public? What a wreck I have made of my life! Not once: How shall I care for Héloïse? What amends can I make her for the wreck of her young life? One need not wonder—since this was the sentiment of the period—that he fears the vengeance of God only because he has broken the rule of continence, not at all because he has led into wrong doing one who trusted and loved him.

The shame of his punishment and the griefs of his life do seem to have made some impression on him, however. Abélard actually learns to speak of "the shameful treachery of which I was guilty towards your uncle." One can but compare him with Rousseau; those who have read the latter's fascinating, eloquent, but disgusting *Confessions* cannot fail to remember that there is the same inordinate vanity and selfishness in them as young men, the same misery and insane fear of foes, sometimes purely imaginary, in them as old men.

Beginning as a vulgar passion, there is no doubt that Abélard's feeling for Héloïse afterward became more honorable. After their separation, and the softening, chastening influence of his misfortunes, he developed for her a real affection. Though there is a constraint, a coldness in the address of his letters, and often too much solicitude about form and too much display of erudition, the heart of the man is moved in spite of himself. He begins his first letter to her: "To Héloïse, his well-beloved sister in Christ, Abélard, her brother in Christ;" the second: "To the spouse of Christ, the servant of that same Christ." But he shows a tenderness for her at the very start; if he has not written to her and advised her before, he says, it is because he had such absolute confidence in her

judgment. He calls her his "sister, once so dear in the flesh," and sends her a Psalter, which she is to use in imploring the Divine mercy for him. He will give counsel to her and to her nuns, if she desires it. And here he can dissemble no longer: "But enough of your holy congregation, . . . it is to you, to you whose goodness will, I know, have such power with God, that I address myself. . . . Remember in your prayers him who is your very own." He sends a form of prayer which she and her nuns are to use for him. Then the man once more gets the better of the monk: "If it chance that the Lord deliver me up into the hands of mine enemies, and that they, victorious, put me to death, or if, while far from you, some accident should bring me to that goal whither all flesh is tending, let my body, whether it be already buried or simply abandoned, be brought under your care, I implore you, to your cemetery."

It is pleasant to read his letters, after one has become convinced that the man really loved Héloïse; then, one finds in them gentleness and consideration for her feelings. With patience and adroitness, he answers the questions she asks, distracts her thoughts, still too much intent on him, and works out for her an elaborate scheme of government for use in the Paraclete; and one can understand that this, if anything, would have been a consolation to Héloïse, to feel that the whole tenor of her life was regulated by the affectionate legislation of the man whom she had loved.

About the love of Héloïse we need not hesitate. "Truly, she did love him," says the old chronicler of Saint Martin de Tours, and the ages since have been but echoing this. We must try, however, to form some more definite idea of the personality of one who is perhaps the greatest figure in an actual romance that the world has known. Of her

beauty there can be no question; but we neither know nor very greatly care whether she was tall and dark or slender and fair. Probably we should be safe in assuming, on general principles, that she was a blonde, since the predilection for that style of beauty was so strong that Saint Bernard devotes a whole sermon to proving that there is no contradiction in the statement in the Song of Songs: "I am black, but comely." The most remarkable thing about her was her learning. Even when Abélard first met her, she was "most distinguished for the extent of her learning," . . . "in great renown throughout the kingdom" for her proficiency. Her knowledge included not only Latin, but Greek and even Hebrew, both rarely understood even among men in a day when men usually got all and women none of the education that could be had. Her monastery at the Paraclete became a school as famous in its way as Abélard had made Paris.

Of another trait in her character, too, we can speak with certainty. Together with her learning went firmness of judgment and perfect sanity, the elements which go to make up what we vaguely call character. We have seen Abélard expressing his confidence in her wisdom and judgment. Saint Bernard, the bitter enemy of Abélard, could not withhold his admiration from her, although she herself, a faithful partisan of her husband, always spoke of Saint Bernard as "the false Apostle." The latter, as was natural in a man renowned for intellect and for asceticism, was more struck by the grandeur of her character than moved by her personal charms, and he wrote a letter to the Pope, commending her as a prioress, in a tone of lofty esteem rather than sympathy. Her own conduct, we have remarked, was above reproach, and her convent was so well governed that its rule became the standard for all the convents of her day. Whatever may have been the

violence of her grief over the separation from Abélard, she was too proud to expose her feelings to the world. She lived on bravely, honorably, respected by high and low, yet making no secret of the fact that she had loved and still did love Abélard. One does not wonder that she won the popular fame which has kept her name alive, and which has fixed the epithet applied by Villon some three centuries later: *La très-sage Héloïse.* In all the happy phrases of the *Ballade des Belles Dames du Temps Jadis* there is no juster epithet.

In striking contrast to the brutal selfishness of Abélard is the noble disinterestedness and complete effacement of self seen in the conduct of Héloïse. Realizing that with him success in his vocation is everything and love but an episode, she is content. More than this, she does everything in her power to make him sacrifice her for the sake of the career which she knows he is bent upon. She flatters him, feeds his vanity, already overgreat, and consistently keeps out of view her own woman's feelings. When Abélard, with what he considers unusual and exemplary generosity, offers to marry her—one can fancy that he was not very urgent—this is part of the argument she uses to dissuade him: "She asked," says Abélard, "what atonement would not the world have a right to require of her should she deprive it of such a light? What curses she would call upon her head! What a loss this marriage would be to the Church! What tears it would cost philosophy! Would it not be an unseemly and deplorable thing to see a man whom nature had created for the whole world made the slave of one woman? . . . The marriage would be a shame and a burden to me . . . What agreement could there be between the labor of the school and the cares of a house, between the desk and the cradle? . . . Is there a man who, devoted to the meditations of philosophy

or to the study of the Scriptures, could endure the cries of a child, the singing of the nurse as she put it to sleep, the continual coming and going of the servants, the incessant worries of young children?"

That Abélard has reported her arguments with accuracy we need not doubt when we come upon this remarkable and often quoted passage in her first letter: "I never thought . . . of my own wishes; it was always yours, you know yourself, that my heart was bent upon satisfying. Although the name of wife seems both more sacred and more enduring, I should have preferred that of mistress, or even concubine . . . thinking that, the more humble I made myself for your sake, the more right I should have to your favor, and the less stain I should put upon the brilliancy of your glory."

When their misfortunes came upon them and Abélard wanted her to enter the cloister she obeyed without complaint; but the truth comes out at the close of her first letter: "When you entered the service of God, I followed, nay, I preceded you . . . You made me first take the veil and the vows, you chained me to God before yourself. This mistrust, the only lack of confidence in me you ever showed, filled me with grief and shame, me, who would, God knows, have followed you or have gone before you unhesitatingly into the very flames of hell! For my heart was no longer with me but with you." In this letter are the only things that even look like reproaches on her part; she complains of his not writing to her, of his grudging her even the poor consolation of a letter, when she had done all for him: "Only tell me, if you can, why, since the retirement from the world which you yourself enjoined upon me, you have neglected me. Tell me, I say, or I will say what I think, and what is on everybody's lips. Ah! it was lust rather than love which attracted you to

me . . . and that is why, your desire once satisfied, all demonstrations of affection ceased with the desire which inspired them." She implores him, therefore, to write and silence these disquieting voices in her heart.

There was no hypocrisy in Héloïse; she never was resigned to her seclusion in the convent, and never pretended to be. She wrote to Abélard that she was continuing to live in the convent only to obey him, "for it was not love of God, but your wish, your wish alone which cast my youth into the midst of monastic austerities." From the very monastery of which she was prioress she writes her burning letters. The first is superscribed: *Domino suo, imo patri, conjugi suo, imo fratri; ancilla sua, imo filia; ipsius uxor, imo soror; Abelardo Heloissa:*—"To her lord, nay, to her father; to her husband, nay, to her brother; his servant, nay, his daughter; his wife, nay, his sister; to Abélard, Héloïse." She seems to lack words to voice the passionate devotion of her heart, and comes at the last to the best and simplest, a veritable cry of the heart it is—To Abélard, Héloïse. Even in the letters subsequent to Abélard's patient endeavor to allay the transports of devotion to a mere man in one who had vowed her life to Christ, she does not restrain her feelings entirely. She superscribes them: "To him who is all for her after Christ, she who is all for him in Christ," and finally, "To her sovereign master, his devoted slave." It is true that the passion is more under control, but it is there nevertheless; for in one of these letters she ever and anon addresses Abélard as "my greatest blessing," and deliberately says: "Under all circumstances, God knows, I have feared offending you more than I have feared offending Him; and it is you far more than God whom I wish to please; it was a word from you, no divine call, that made me take the veil." And she says, in reply

to Abélard's request to be buried in the cemetery of the Paraclete: "I shall be more intent on following you without delay than upon providing for your burial."

Bigotry or narrow piety, which are so much alike as to be scarcely distinguishable, might find fault with the uncompromising frankness of Héloïse in confessing the persistence of love after she is a nun. She admits that she loved Abélard passionately; moreover: "If I must indeed lay bare all the weakness of my miserable heart, I do not find in my heart contrition or penitence sufficient to appease God. I cannot withhold myself from complaining of His pitiless cruelty in regard to the outrage inflicted on you, and I only offend Him by rebellious murmurings against His decrees, instead of seeking to allay His wrath by repentance. Can it be said, in fact, that one is truly penitent, whatever be the bodily penances submitted to, when the soul still harbors the thought of sin and burns with the same passions as of old?" She cannot bring herself to regret or even to forget and to cease to long for the pleasures of their love. "They praise me for purity of life; it is only because they do not know of my hypocrisy. The purity of the flesh is set down to the credit of virtue; but true virtue is of the soul, not of the body." These confessions, it strikes us, are proof of the purity and loftiness of her ideals; she will not accept credit for virtues that are only skin deep; she honors the robe she wears too much to soil it by any sort of indulgence that might give occasion for scandal or for irreverent scoffing. But she bravely owns: "I do not seek the crown of victory (over my evil thoughts), it is enough for me to avoid the danger."

In a person so honest with herself we are not surprised to find a charity for the weaknesses of others and a catholicity of view in regard to things moral and religious quite in advance of the rather cramped asceticism distinctive,

for example, of Saint Bernard, whom we take as a typical representative of the religious feeling of the age. In the last of her letters, she shows her learning, it must be admitted, with a little too much pedantry; but that was in accord with the habit of the day. She overloads her letter with useless erudition in the way of appeals to this and that holy man or this and that text of Scripture to support a point which the reader would accept as axiomatic. But behind this there is good sense and kindness. She asks Abélard to determine, in the rule he is to make for her convent, all sorts of practical points. Can women, being physically weaker, fast as rigidly as men? Yet meat is not so necessary for women; is it really a deprivation, then, to make them abstain from meat? Women are not so prone to intemperance as men, and at times they really need some stimulant; how shall we determine in regard to wines? We should avoid, of course, male visitors; but do not vain, gossiping, worldly women corrupt their own sex just as much as men would? Above all, she says, nuns must learn to eschew Pharisaism, the better-than-thou frame of mind. "The blessings promised us by Christ were not promised to those alone who were priests; woe unto the world, indeed, if all that deserved the name of virtue were shut up in a cloister."

The close of this last letter is in a tone of religious exaltation which but poorly conceals the more human sentiments of the noble Abbess Héloïse: "It is for thee, O my master, it is for thee, as long as thou livest, to institute the rule which we are to follow evermore. For, after God, thou wast the founder of our community; it is for thee, then, with God's assistance, to legislate for our order."

The two letters in which Abélard answers this request are more coldly formal, less personal, than any of the

others. At the end, for example, instead of some tender reminiscence, some hint that it was at the bidding of love that he had poured forth his erudition on the subject of the monastic life, we find merely an exhortation such as might be addressed by any father confessor to one seeking his direction: "Imitate, in the love of study and of good books, those blessed disciples of Saint Jerome, Paula and Eustochia, at whose request this great doctor wrote so many works that are a guiding light to the church."

What were the rules by which Héloïse and her nuns were to live? In essence not fundamentally different from those in use in regular monasteries of the Benedictine rule, they are yet of sufficient interest to warrant us in giving a brief account, a mere abstract, of the very lengthy and verbose commentary on monasticism which Héloïse received from Abélard. We cannot doubt that a person of her intelligence and strength of character followed the spirit, not the letter, of the law, and made her nuns live as she lived, beyond the utmost reach of evil report.

The three cardinal virtues in the view of monasticism are Chastity, Poverty, Silence. These the nuns must observe most strictly, and such observance involves the renunciation of all family ties, of all worldly affections and desires. As there is less of temptation to worldliness in the solitary places of the earth, the convent should be remote. The absurd extent to which the cult of mere chastity was exalted in the mediæval mind has been commented on by many a writer; but one little incident or illustration from the book by which Héloïse was to govern herself and her community may be forgiven us. Abélard quotes from a letter of Saint Jerome. In the life of Saint Martin, written by Sulpicius, we read that the saint wished to pay his respects to a virgin renowned for her exemplary conduct and her chastity, who, it seems, had spent all

her life since girlhood shut up in a small cell. She refused to allow Saint Martin to come into her dwelling, but, looking out of the crevice which served for a window, she said: "Father, pray where you are, for I have never received a visit from any man." Saint Martin "gave thanks to God that, thanks to such a mode of life, she had preserved her chastity." The humor, the irony, of such a remark appeals to us; but it never occurred to Saint Martin, to Saint Jerome, to Abélard, or to Héloïse, that she who had continued chaste merely because she had bottled herself up in a living tomb did not merit praise for any extraordinary virtue: one might as well praise Robinson Crusoe on his island for not indulging in the dissipations of society.

To continue the rules for the Paraclete, which was certainly situated in a place remote enough to protect its inmates from worldly intrusions, we may add that the rule advises that the grounds or inclosure of the convent should contain "all that is needful for the life of the convent, that is to say, a garden, water, a mill, a bolting house and a bakery oven," in short, everything that can be thought of, in order to obviate the necessity of communication with the outside world.

Héloïse's monastery, we may be assured, did not want for a diligent abbess, who was to be assisted by six subordinates: "For the entire administration of the convent we believe that there ought to be seven mistresses, so many and no more: the porteress, the cellaress, the vesturess (*robaria*), the infirmaress, the precentress (*cantaria*), the sacristan, and finally a deaconess, called now an abbess. . . . In this camp of Heaven's militia . . . the deaconess takes the place of the general-in-chief, to whom all are in all things obedient." The six other sisters called officers, who command under her, rank as colonels or captains. The rest of the nuns belonging

regularly to the order are the soldiers of the Lord, while the lay sisters, who were employed in menial offices and were not initiated into the order, but merely took vows renouncing the world, were to be the foot soldiers.

Héloïse would accord quite well with the requirements for an abbess or deaconess. Such a one must have learning sufficient to read and to comprehend the Scriptures and the rules of her order. She must be dignified, able to command respect and obedience. "Only as a last resort and for pressing reasons should women of high rank or of great fortune be chosen as abbesses." Full of the importance of their titles, they are ordinarily vain, presumptuous, proud. Being the guardian of the whole community, the abbess should keep a close watch over her own conduct, lest she corrupt by evil example. Above all, the abbess is forbidden to "live in greater comfort, greater ease, than any of her nuns. She shall not have any private apartments for dining or sleeping; she shall share all with her flock, whose needs she will comprehend so much the better." When guests are to be entertained at table the abbess is not to make this an excuse for providing delicacies on which she herself may feast, the guest is to sit at the table with the other nuns, though a special dish may be provided for her, and the abbess herself is to wait on her, and afterward to eat with the servants. According to a maxim of Saint Anthony, as fish that are kept long out of water die, even so monks who live long out of their cells in communication with worldly folk break their vow of seclusion. We may recall that Chaucer's jolly monk held this same text "not worth an oyster"; but the abbess of the Paraclete is specially enjoined "never to leave the convent to attend to outside business." This reminds us that it was provided that the Paraclete should have a certain number of monks attached

to it. Convents, indeed, were rarely if ever independent of masculine supervision, if not control, and in this case it is specially provided that the convent "shall be subject always to a monastery, in such sort that one abbot may preside, and . . . that there be but one fold and one shepherd." The relations, however, are decidedly to the advantage of the nuns; their subjection is only nominal, and every provision is made, in the letter of the law, that the monks shall attend merely to things outside of the convent and shall not meddle with its administration: "If we wish that the abbot . . . should have control over the nuns, it is only in such sort that he shall recognize as his superiors the spouses of Christ, whose servant only he is, and that he shall find pleasure in serving, not in commanding them. He should be like the intendant of a royal household, who does not venture to make his mistress feel his power. . . . He or his representatives shall never be at liberty to speak to the virgins of the Lord in the absence of their abbess. . . . He shall decide nothing concerning them or their affairs until he has taken counsel with her; and he shall transmit his instructions or orders only through her. . . . All that concerns costume, food, even money, if there be any, shall be gathered together and put in the custody of the nuns; out of their superfluity they shall provide what is needful for the monks. The monks, therefore, shall take charge of all outside affairs, and the nuns of all those things which it becomes women to attend to in the house, to wit, to sew the frocks of the monks, to wash them, to knead the bread, to put it in the oven and bake it. They shall have charge of the dairy and its dependencies; they shall feed the hens and geese; in short, they shall do all that women can do better than men. . . . Men and women both shall vow obedience to the abbess."

Though not so radical in some respects as the constitution which Robert D'Arbrissel imposed upon his monastery of Fontevrault, where women were exalted above men in all respects, the provisions cited above seem sufficient to insure the independence of the nuns. There are, of course, careful rules to safeguard the virtue of both monks and nuns in the close relations necessitated by the conventual scheme; but as these are not different from what ordinary prudence would suggest—and ordinary craft circumvent—we need not pause to give them.

The deaconess or abbess was not absolute; she must take counsel with her subordinates, and for some things she must convene the whole convent to ask advice and consent. Her subordinates had duties and responsibilities of no mean sort. The sacristan, who is also treasurer, shall have charge of the chapel and its ornaments, their repairs, etc. She must care for the things needful for the services of the church, such as the incense, the relics, the bells, and the communion wafers, which latter the nuns are to make of pure wheat flour. The sacristan, too, having to decorate the church in keeping with the seasons of the religious year, must be enough of a scholar to know how to compute and determine the feast days according to the calendar.

With the precentress, or mistress of the choir, rested the responsibility for the church music. She was to train the choir, and to teach music, in which she must be well versed. Besides this, she was the librarian, must give out and take in the books, and take care of books and illuminations. In case of the illness or other incapacity of the abbess, the precentress took her place.

One of the most trying places must have been that of infirmaress, who not only had charge of the sick in the capacity of nurse, but "must keep herself supplied with

proper medicines, according to the resources of the place, and this she can do the better if she knows a little of medicine. . . . She must know how to let blood (the medicine of the period relied very largely upon phlebotomy), so that this operation may not require the access of any man among the nuns." Much of the simpler knowledge and practice of medicine was permitted to women; the simpler medicine, indeed, was the only hope of the unfortunate sick in the days of drastic doctoring.

The nun called the *robaria*, who had charge of the wardrobe, we have christened "vesturess," for lack of a better name. She provided and cared for the clothing of both monks and nuns,—not so simple a matter as it might seem, for "she shall have the sheep sheared, and shall receive the leather (for shoes, etc.); she shall collect and take care of the wool and linen and see to the making of the cloth from them; she shall distribute thread, needles, and scissors (to the nuns assigned to work under her). She shall have charge of the dormitory and of the beds; and she shall be charged with directing the cutting, sewing, and washing of the table-cloths, napkins, and all the linen of the monastery. . . . She shall have all the necessary implements for her work, and shall regulate the tasks assigned to each sister. She shall have charge of the novices until they are admitted to the community." The novices, by the way, were regularly taught in the convent, and a good deal of the work for which religious exercises left the nuns little time was assigned to them.

The clothes worn by the nuns of Héloïse's convent were to be of the simplest kind. "The clothes shall be of black woollen stuff; no other color, for that best accords with the mourning of penitence; and no fur is more fitting than the fleece of lambs for the spouses of Christ. . . ." And this black robe was not to extend lower than the

heel ("to avoid raising the dust"), or to have sleeves longer than the natural length to cover arm and hand,—a provision which one can understand only after seeing pictures of the immense sleeves in fashion. "The veils shall not be of silk, but of cloth or dyed stuff. They shall wear chemises of cloth next the skin, and these they shall not take off even to sleep. Considering the delicacy of their constitutions, we will not forbid the use of mattresses and sheets. . . . For covering (at night), we think a chemise, a robe and a lamb skin, adding over these, during the cold weather, a mantle for covering to the bed, will suffice. Each bed must have a mattress, a bolster, a pillow, a counterpane, and a sheet." In order to guard against vermin and dirt, all clothing should be provided for each nun in double sets. On their heads the nuns were to wear a white band with the veil over it; when necessary, on account of the tonsure, a bonnet of lamb skin might be worn. When a nun died, she was dressed in clean but coarse garments, with sandals on her feet, and the garments sewn or fastened to the body, so that they might not be disarranged in the presence of the priests officiating at her funeral. As a special honor, the abbess could be buried in a garment of haircloth, sewn around her like a sack.

The duties of the porteress were sufficiently simple, consisting chiefly in guarding the gate and admitting only persons properly accredited. But the cellaress had duties manifold. She "shall have charge of all that concerns the feeding of the nuns: cellar, refectory, kitchen, mill, bakery, bake ovens, gardens, orchards and fields, beehives, flocks, cattle of all kinds, and poultry." With keen insight into human nature, it is especially provided that she shall not reserve any tidbits for herself at the table, with the admonition that this was precisely what Judas did.

We have given but the merest sketch of the provisions by which Héloïse was to regulate her life. The rule determines points great and small; meat can be allowed three times a week, except during Lent; wine may be used in moderation; services must be held at such and such times, with work or sleep between; nuns must never go barefooted, nor gossip with visitors, and so on. But one thing we must add, as illustrative of the manners of the time: "There is one thing more which must be not only forbidden but held in abhorrence, although it is a custom in use in most monasteries: that is that the nuns should wipe their hands or their knives with the pieces of bread remaining from dinner, which are the portion of the poor. To save table linen it is not right to soil the bread of the poor."

In the way of actual facts little is really known of the life of Héloïse. We have sought to trace the fortunes of the man to whom she was so unselfishly yet so passionately attached and to reproduce from her own scanty writings as much as may be of her character. We must now conclude the story of Abélard. After his departure from Saint-Gildas his days were still full of trouble. In 1136 we find him once more triumphing in his old field, delivering his lectures to crowds of students upon Mont Sainte-Geneviève. Not only did his teaching draw crowds, but his book on theology was in every hand, and his doctrines spread beyond the Alps. In the words of one of his enemies, writing to Saint Bernard: *Libri ejus transeunt maria, transvolant Alpes:*—"His books are wafted across the seas, and fly over the Alps." Arnold of Brescia, a disciple of Abélard, was preaching in Italy a more democratic religion and a more liberal form of government, stirring up the wrath of the Church as another Tribune of the People daring to incite the Italian cities to proclaim

their freedom. The final conflict of Abélard's life was preparing.

At Clairvaux, in a valley so dismal as to have won the name of the *Valley of Wormwood*, lived the very incarnation of asceticism, stern religious orthodoxy, and uncompromising conservatism—Saint Bernard. To him, a restless, daring innovator like Abélard was abhorrent. To profess doctrines that led to the view that original sin was less a sin than a punishment, that the redemption of man was an act of pure love, not one of necessity for our redemption, that God, in short, was a God of Love, not a God of Wrath—what was all this but striking at the very root of that exquisite mortification of the flesh, the prayers, the fasting, the actual corporeal torment inflicted upon himself by Saint Bernard in the hope of purchasing remission of his sin? His sin, we may remark, consisted merely in being descended from Adam, for he had been pure in life from his youth up. Saint Bernard was looked upon even in his own life as almost a saint; his influence was tremendous. He now began to stir up the powers of the Church, from the Pope down, against Abélard. The latter, puffed up with pride at his renewed success, or perhaps willing to risk all at one throw, did not wait for the Church to proceed against him: he challenged his enemies to prove his doctrines heretical; he challenged Bernard himself to meet him in debate before a council that was to meet at Sens in 1140. Fully aware of his inferiority as a logician to this trained thinker, Saint Bernard reluctantly consented to take up the battle for orthodoxy. All was ready; Abélard appeared before the council, realized that his case was prejudged, and appealed to Rome. Nevertheless, Saint Bernard got the council to pass judgment against Abélard and to sentence him to silence and to perpetual reclusion in a monastery, and Innocent II., the next year, confirmed

the finding of the council. Broken in spirit, Abélard nevertheless set out for Rome to urge his plea in person, but at Cluni he broke down in health. Tenderly cared for by the good abbot, Peter the Venerable, who effected a sort of reconciliation between Abélard and the triumphant Abbot of Clairvaux, Abélard lingered but a few months. To ease his dying days Peter the Venerable had him removed to the little priory of Saint Marcel, a dependency of Cluni, where he died, April 21, 1142.

In accordance with the wishes of Héloïse and of Abélard himself, Peter the Venerable sent his remains secretly to the Paraclete, writing to Héloïse: "May the Lord keep him for you, to give him back to you through His mercy." There was a heart still in the breast of this old monk; we trust that his prayer has been answered, even as we trust that the absolution which he sent at Héloïse's request has washed away the sins of her lover: "I, Peter, Abbot of Cluni, who received into the monastery of Cluni Peter Abélard, and granted that his body be borne secretly to the Abbess Héloïse and the convent of the Paraclete, by the authority of God Almighty and of all the saints, absolve him, by virtue of my office, from all his sins."

We hear nothing more of Héloïse, except that she provided for her child, left with Abélard's sister in Brittany; but we know that she lived her life not only bravely, but honorably. For twenty-two years more she lived on at the convent over which her husband had established her, and here she died, on the 16th of May, 1164. Her body was buried beside that of her husband in the cemetery of the Paraclete, and a touching legend relates that when, according to the order given by herself, her body was deposited in the tomb of her husband, "Abélard stretched out his arms to receive her and closed them in a last embrace." Through all the centuries love has guarded

their remains; though often shifted, their resting place is still known: in the famous Cimetière de L'Est, Père Lachaise, at Paris, the traveller still sees the tomb of Abélard and Héloïse.

It is not her learning that has made Héloïse famous; it is the accident of her connection with Abélard which has served to keep her name alive. It is not because she was learned or because she was loved by Abélard that we admire her. Her greatness is a moral greatness rare in her time, and not due to her intellect or to the tragic circumstances of her life. The remarkable thing is that, overwhelmed in the ruin of her lover, forced into a convent at twenty, where she obeys him and imitates him, she yet does not change in her heart, she does not suffer the mystic death of the cloister; of her love she never repents, though she does repent of her faults; to the law of monastic asceticism her conscience refuses to submit, let Abélard preach as he will, for she vaguely feels that asceticism is in violation of some higher law of life. The great love in her heart knew no faltering; so much like devotion was it that one feels that she meant no name but that of Abélard to be associated with the words of a dirge attributed to her:

> "With thee I suffered the rigor of destiny;
> With thee shall I, weary, sleep;
> With thee shall I enter Sion."

Chapter III

Women in Early Provencal and French Literature

III

WOMEN IN EARLY PROVENCAL AND FRENCH LITERATURE

GUILHELM—or William—X., Duke of Aquitaine, remorseful because of the ravages committed in Normandy by himself and his allies in 1136, started on an expiatory pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint-James of Compostella. Before going he willed to Louis the Fat, King of France, the guardianship of his daughter, "la très noble demoiselle Eléonore," sole heiress of his extensive dominions, including Poitou, Marche, the Limousin, Auvergne, Gascony, and Guienne. This Eleanor was to be the brilliant and passionate Queen of England, mother of Richard of the Lion Heart and of John Lackland. But we will not anticipate her story, for sixteen years of her life precede the time when she became the queen of Henry II.

The youthful heiress had been left as the feudal ward of King Louis, who lost no time in securing her domain for the crown of France. Duke Guilhelm died in the church of Compostella April 9, 1137–1138. Eleanor, now Duchess of Aquitaine, was but sixteen years of age, but she was not long to remain unmarried. Prince Louis of France, accompanied by a gorgeous company of five hundred knights, under command of the Count Palatine, Thibaud de Champagne, came as her suitor,—a suitor whom she could not refuse. She was married, and crowned as future

Queen of France. On their way back from Bordeaux to Paris the young couple met the news of the death of Louis the Fat. Eleanor was thus Queen of France indeed, but there was more of the south, of Toulouse and Bordeaux and the troubadours in her nature than was quite good for one who was the wife of the correct, devout, narrow-minded, though not stupid or unkind Louis VII.

She came of a race notorious for reckless love of pleasure, for sparkling wit, for vehemence of temper and strong passions, for utter disregard of the merely decorous, the sober commonplace rules of either morals or society. We have seen some of the pranks of her grandfather, William of Poitou. Her father was not less high-tempered, though less brilliant than his troubadour predecessor. His fits of extravagance were followed by fits of penitence in whose sincerity one may place some faith, whereas the troubadour was certainly never sad for long, and apparently not much imbued with religious ardor, even if he did go to the Holy Land as a pious crusader. Eleanor inherited her grandfather's temper and his love of literature, music, fighting, and all that made life worth living, according to the standards of her native land. Let us look at this land of the troubadours, from which Eleanor came, and try to picture the environment to which she was accustomed and which she abandoned to live with the sober, monkish, unlovely French king, whose court and whose city of Paris did not compare with the gay capital of Bordeaux, where her father and her grandfather had gathered the most brilliant poets and musicians of Provence.

While the northern and western portions of France, including even that muddy *Lutetia Parisorum* which has become the modern Paris, were for but a short time, comparatively, under Roman rule, there was a portion of

France, between the Rhone and the Swiss Alps, which was so distinctively and peculiarly a part of the great empire that it was called *Provincia,* "the Province," or, as we know it, Provence. It was in this beautiful land, the French Riviera, that the Roman legions established their first posts, long before there was a Roman Empire. Here they found a civilization ready to their hands, for in the centre of their new Provincia was the famous port of Massillia—Marseilles—established long before by Greeks and Phœnicians. To the present day one finds at Arles, at Nîmes, at Avignon, titanic ruins bearing witness to the Roman civilization. It was a fertile country, glowing with rich fruits and flowers, and favored with a climate which has made it famous since the days of Rome. While the north of France was hopelessly barbarized by Teutonic inroads and long years of barbaric warfare, the civilization of Provence was rather checked than destroyed. Marseilles was still a port, and the commerce of the east, of the Mediterranean, of Rome, came through Marseilles, not only for Gaul but for Britain. The influence of this constant intercourse, no less than the large infusion of Latin or Hellenic blood, kept the people of Provence from relapsing into the primitive state of the people further to the north. They were, moreover, a gay and pleasure-loving people by nature, and probably always less savage and rough than the Franks. We may remember that even at the beginning of our story the court of the pious King Robert, according to the monkish chronicles, was hopelessly corrupted by the attendants of his Provençal bride, Constance, with their scandalously fashioned costumes and their ungodly minstrelsy. The rich clothing, the minstrelsy, the more gracious manners, were always characteristic of the southerners, from the very first moment we hear of them until the end.

During the eleventh century, while the kingdom of France was just beginning to gain something like an ascendancy over the other provinces which were eventually to constitute a real power under one rule, the riches and the power of the Mediterranean district came to full flower. We speak of this whole territory as Provence, although in reality Provence proper was but a small portion of the whole. It would be, perhaps, better to confine one's self to the old distinction between north and south France, based on the difference in dialect. Dante, distinguishing between three groups of the tongues derived from Latin, says: *Alii Oc, alii Oil, alii Si, affirmando loquuntur:*—"For the affirmative, some use *Oc* (Provençal) some use *Oil* (French), some use *Si* (Italian)." The *langue d'oc* was the tongue used in that part of France south of a line drawn from the mouth of the Garonne to the Alps, including not only Provence but Guienne, Gascony, Languedoc, Auvergne, etc. The people and the language, however, throughout this whole territory, were generally named from that Provincia which, as we have said, was the most fertile and the most favored. Thus, in ordinary speech, a citizen of Béziers, Toulouse, or even Bordeaux was as much a Provençal as one from Arles or Aix.

Among the other influences to which Provence owed part of its culture one must not forget that of Spain. At the time of which we write a large part of the richest lands in Spain was in the possession of a race more cultured, more intellectual, more refined, despite their warlike nature, than any race with which western Europe had yet come in contact. The story of the Saracen empire in Spain, its rise, its glorious struggle, its almost fabulous luxury, and its pathetic fall, is one of the most fascinating in history. Arab songs, Arab singers, Arab instruments

became known among the Spaniards, and even in the face of continual warfare some little of infidel arts and sciences and refinements penetrated and softened the rougher-mannered civilization of the Christians.

On Spain itself this Oriental influence was, of course, strongest; but the relations between Spain and the south of France were at all times close, and the relations between Provence and Spain were made still more intimate when, in the early part of the twelfth century, the crown of Provence passed to Raymond Bérenger, Count of Barcelona, who had married Douce de Provence.

Under these influences the nobility of Provence developed a culture perhaps purely artificial and exotic, but certainly far in advance of that prevailing in any other part of France. With their civilization came, of course, a knowledge of the gentler arts and a feeling for the beautiful. At a time when French literature consisted of a few fragments of documents, chronicles, or dull legends of the saints, Provence had developed a literature of most astonishing richness and delicacy. The surprising thing about this literature of Provence is that it has no beginnings, no childhood, but is almost as perfect in artistic finish, in the careful handling of most intricate rhymes and stanzas, when the first troubadour sings as it became during the two hundred years of its life. There were songs or poems in stanzas of varying structure and lines of varying length, some really lyric, and some epic. The most distinctive forms of the lyric poetry were probably the dirge or *planh;* the contention or *tenson,* a poem in which two or more persons maintain an argument on questions of love, or chivalry, etc., each using stanzas terminating in similar rhymes, somewhat like the style of poem long after known in Scottish literature as a "flyting;" and the satiric poem or pasquinade, the *sirvente,* often a fierce war

song in which the poet lashed his foes and urged his men on to battle.

The social conditions of France during this period were such as to make caste distinctions very marked. That a *roturier*, a plain peasant, or even a tradesman, should become the social equal of a noble was a thing unheard of. But in Provence—curiously enough when one remembers the excessive refinement of luxury encouraged in this land of flowers—the society was much more democratic. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that among a people who had already discovered that literature and music were arts the artist was welcomed, talent was recognized and rewarded, no matter in what class it was found. Yet the troubadours as a class belong to the nobility. That this was almost necessarily so one can easily understand, for the troubadour was expected to live a life of gay extravagance in his own château and to travel about the country during favoring weather, accompanied by a little band of retainers who must be trained musicians, and who at the castles they visited sang or performed pieces of their master's composing.

We can imagine what a flutter there must have been in the breasts of the ladies, always the prime object of the troubadour's songs, when the gay cavalcade approached, heralded by the song of the *jongleurs:* "We come, bringing a precious balsam which cures all sorts of ills, and heals the troubles both of body and mind. It is contained in a vase of gold, adorned with jewels, the most rare. Even to see it is wonderful pleasure, as you will find if you care to try. The balsam is the music of our master, the vase of gold is our courtly company. Would you have the vase open, and disclose its ineffable treasure?"

The troubadour himself must go in knightly panoply, and he and his musicians or jongleurs were usually provided

with rich clothing. Gifts, of course, might be accepted from a sovereign, but no pecuniary recompense; the knightly minstrel disdained to sing for hire; it was pure love of his art that inspired him, and the idea of making it a lucrative profession never occurred to him. The troubadour, therefore, had to live upon his patrimony—until he squandered it in riotous living—and only a gentleman could afford to do that. Of the scores of troubadours whose names are known to us, the great majority are nobles, though not always belonging to the higher nobility; but the artist, the musician who "found" enchanting melodies, was almost *ex officio* a knight, a chevalier,—the terms troubadour and chevalier being interchangeable,—and knighthood was considered so essential that one of the well-known troubadours was accused of having conferred the dignity upon himself, since no one else would knight him. Among the number of the troubadours one can count a score or more of reigning princes, "counts and dukes by the dozen, . . . many princes of royal blood, and finally four kings." Yet beside the royal troubadour, and associated with him in a perfect freemasonry of art, one finds the troubadour of humble birth. Bertrand de Born, the petty baron, was on terms of perfect equality with the sons of Henry II.: Geoffrey, he called by the nickname of *Rassa*, Henry was *Marinier*, and Richard was *Richard Oc e No* (Richard Yea and Nay). Pierre Vidal, the most eccentric of all the *genus irritabile*, was the son of a furrier of Toulouse, and yet, being a poet, was the friend of princes, notably of Alphonso, the troubadour king of Arragon. Bernard de Ventadour, who ventured, unrebuked, to send love songs to haughty Queen Eleanor, was the son of the baker of the château de Ventadour. There was, therefore, much greater freedom of intercourse in Provence than in the

north of France, where feudalism had taken deeper root, where the warrior was merely a hard hitter, not a musician who went about equally prepared to fight or to sing.

The grace and polish of Provençal society was, of course, only relative. At best, it was merely a surface polish in many cases; and to us the manners of the troubadours might seem as coarse as their morals were corrupt. The very extravagance of the troubadour's life, with its constant demands for large expenditure in travel or in fantastic entertainments and revels at his château, the persistent thirst for excitement and pleasure in themselves would have been sufficient to foster licentious habits. Prodigality reduced many a troubadour to the rank of a mere jongleur or hired musician. A mediæval moralist remarks, for the benefit of *la cigale*,—who probably paid no attention whatever, but went on singing,—*Homo joculatoribus intentus cito habebit uxorem cui nomen erit paupertas, ex qua generabitur filius cui nomen erit derisio* [He who devotes himself to minstrelsy will soon have a wife named Poverty, of whom will be born a son named Ignominy.] But whether or not the troubadour made a sinful waste of his fortune, his one business in life was understood to be making love.

Every troubadour chose some lady to whom he devoted his talents, seeking to make her

"Glorious by his pen, and famous by his sword."

Like a true knight-errant of music and poetry, he travelled over the land, singing the praises of his lady-love and upholding the superiority of her charms in the lists, in battles with the infidel, or in any chance adventure on the road. After enduring in her honor whatever fortune might send him, and singing to her in songs of triumph or in plaintive love songs, he would return to claim his reward. So far,

all is romantic and innocent enough. One can indulge in lovely sentimental fancies concerning this world of gentle singers and fair ladies and poesy and sunshine. But in sober fact the loves of the troubadours were neither so romantic nor even so innocent as one would gladly think. In a certain class of modern novels, the hero rarely experiences a *grande passion*, as it is charitably called, except for some other man's wife; so the lady to whom the troubadour devotes himself, to whom he pours out his passion with all the cunning and warmth that art can devise, and of whose favors he sometimes most ungallantly boasts, is almost invariably a married woman. Fortunately, despite the fact that poets are given to proclaiming that truth and poetry are almost synonyms, most of us do not take them *au pied de la lettre*. "Most loving is feigning," says a good authority, and certainly most of the protestations in erotic poetry are hardly to be taken at their face value. So we may safely assume that the intercourse between the troubadours and the ladies to whom their songs are dedicated was generally quite innocent; and the burning desire, the tragic despair, or the exultant passion, of the poems was also largely figurative, mere squibs and crackers of love. Certainly, if it were otherwise, the husbands of Provence were most unselfish patrons of art.

Yet, making all the allowances that common sense or charity may warrant, we have to admit that there is only too much evidence of deplorable moral laxity in the days of the troubadours. The very first troubadour of note, Count William of Poitou, Eleanor's grandfather, was notorious for his contemptuous attitude toward the Church and for his licentiousness. In fact, the poems of William are coarse and almost brutal in their tone, utterly lacking in the superfine gallantry, the preciosity, which is characteristic of the love poetry of his troubadour successors.

There is in the poems a sort of bold laughter and wit, and the technical part of the work shows a most surprising artistic finish, but nothing that speaks of chivalrous ideals. It is with some wonder, therefore, that we read in the old Provençal biography of this first of the troubadours that "the Count of Poitou was one of the most courteous men in the world, and a great deceiver of ladies; and he was a brave knight and had much to do with love affairs; and he knew well how to sing and make verses; and for a long time he roamed all through the land to deceive the ladies." According to all accounts, William was very successful in this gallant undertaking. It was the troubadour's business, openly avowed, to "deceive the ladies," and among a people so susceptible as those of Provence many must have been the domestic tragedies brought on by these erotic knights-errant.

When love making, or the writing of love songs, becomes a profession one need not be surprised to find that there is a great deal of pure conventionality. The love of beauty is not supreme in all hearts, even in those of poets, and so the love poetry of the troubadours is as artificial, as overstrained and oversweetened as a panegyric of an Elizabethan poet upon that very questionable beauty of the "vestal thronèd in the west." What was the actual standard of beauty among the ladies of Provence is hard to determine, for they are all much the same in the songs of the troubadours. The lady has skin whiter than milk, purer than the driven snow, of tint more delicate than the pearl. Upon her cheeks the roses vie with the lilies, the delicate color mounting at the sound of her praises and melting away in danger or distress. A wealth of flaxen hair, of silky texture, crowns her head, and a pair of soft blue eyes gaze languishingly upon the lover; and when they close, the sun is gone from the face of nature, so dark

does the world seem to him. But when she walks abroad in smiling beauty, the very birds stop their own love making to chant of her loveliness, and the flowers turn to look at her. With all this delicacy of physical beauty goes a constitution as delicate, for she faints at the news of disaster or danger to her troubadour. When the monkish chroniclers are so very cold in their descriptions of personal charms, we are left to the poets. It may be, then, that, in troubadour eyes at least, Eleanor herself was of the type we have described.

It was from a society formed of such elements, and from the very home of music and poetry, that the young Queen of France came to Paris, at that time no doubt a very dismal place, inhabited by people who, however superior as Christians, must have seemed to her uncultured barbarians. The details of her life during the first ten or fifteen years after her marriage are obscure, and certainly of little historic interest. We can feel sure only that her union with Louis VII. must have been distinctly and increasingly irksome to both parties. With the best will in the world, historians can say no more of him than that he was a safe and conservative ruler, never achieving any marked success, and yet never incurring serious disaster. As a man he was cold, personally unattractive and unsympathetic, possessed of unquestioned physical courage, and yet at times fatally timid and irresolute; easily influenced, especially by the one power which one might fancy most distasteful to Eleanor, the Church, for he was devout to the point of superstition. If Eleanor had been a mere sybarite, a nerveless devotee of pleasure, she might have lived in obscurity and borne with the puritanism of her husband. But her blood was too hot for that; she was full of ambition and of energy and relentless determination to realize that ambition. As Queen of France there was no

great rôle for her to play. She was young, and for the moment Louis and his counsellors governed France, while she was satisfied with less ambitious occupations. One of these occupations was, no doubt, keeping up her connection with the troubadours of her native land, with whom her family and her ducal court of Bordeaux were traditionally associated. The exact dates of her friendship with various troubadours we do not, of course, know; but we do know that she made rather frequent trips to her beloved Bordeaux during these years, and that she was commonly recognized as a patroness of the troubadours.

We next hear of Eleanor in a rôle not altogether in keeping with her troubadour affiliations: one does not think of the daughter of William of Poitou as a defender of the Cross, yet it is as a crusader that Eleanor first makes a stir in history. Much has been made by historians of the influence of the Crusades; here we are concerned to remark only that the spirit of adventure spread even to the women, and that many a dame went to the Holy Land, some even in panoply of war. It was a wonderful step forward in the freedom of women, if we recall the conditions existing a generation before. Our great Provençal queen was a typical representative, not only of the chivalry and love of adventure of Provence, but of the spirit of greater independence prevailing among women. When her grave and devout husband began his preparations for the Second Crusade, in 1147, Eleanor determined to accompany him.

A woman of her energy could not, of course, be content with the *fainéant* rôle of spouse and consoler. Accordingly, she organized a regular band of Amazons among the great ladies of France, including the Countesses of Toulouse and Flanders and other noble dames. The costume of this troop was the most notable thing about them. The

gay and extravagant queen had devoted much time and thought to the devising of a dress sufficiently showy for herself and her ladies, and, according to the accounts of the chronicler William of Tyre, to whom we are indebted for most of the details of her crusading exploits, Eleanor and her companions presented a gorgeous spectacle. Accompanied by bands of troubadours and musicians, with much flaunting of gay banners and glittering of spangles, Queen Eleanor, clad man-fashion, in glittering spangle armor, and her ladies rode in the van of the army. Their discarded distaffs these martial ladies sent to recreant knights who had preferred staying at home to crusading.

The saintly Bernard of Clairvaux, the most powerful religious influence of his time, one whose inspired preaching could move vast audiences to a perfect frenzy of religious exaltation, had been induced, almost compelled, to preach the crusade for that loyal son of the Church, Louis VII. Saint Bernard himself confessed to serious misgivings about the righteousness of this crusade, and would not be a second Peter the Hermit to lead the vast host of the Cross. One can imagine that the doings of Louis's queen must have filled the soul of Saint Bernard with misgivings still more serious. Eleanor, indeed, was incapable of religious feeling of sufficient depth to sympathize with the purer motives of fanaticism that inspired the best of the crusaders. For her it was a pleasure jaunt, a glorious opportunity to enjoy all the pomp and circumstance of being a queen, and at least the show of power. Louis, perhaps, would have been glad to leave his rather too theatrical and frivolous consort behind, for the crusade was to him a serious business; but it is likely that the large contingent of Gascons and Poitevins, devoted to their troubadour duchess, were hardly so eager about following the King of France.

The crusade, whose history we need not dwell upon, was like a triumphal procession as far as Constantinople. To be sure, there were misery and sickness and death among the hordes of poor camp followers and pilgrims who had sought the protection of the great army as they journeyed to that Holy Land whose mere sight, they fancied, would be as a balm to their seared consciences; but Queen Eleanor and her princesses experienced nothing but the vain excitement of it all, the wonders of the Greek civilization, the glitter and splendor. Warned by the disastrous experience of the Germans who had preceded him, Louis elected to follow the coast route along the shores of Asia Minor, and he and his army were safely transported across the straits by the Greeks.

In the march that followed, the vain and headstrong Eleanor more than once jeopardized herself and the whole army. She insisted on leading the van, and her too complaisant husband consented. The result was that Eleanor, with utter disregard of strategy and of ordinary military precautions, conducted her forces as if the expedition were merely a party of pleasure, selected her camps and her route according to the beauty of the landscape, and all the time flirted in the most irresponsible fashion with anyone who attracted her. It was said that she had a most shameful intrigue with a handsome young emir, accepted gifts from Sultan Noureddin, and spoke of her husband with increasing flippancy, disrespect, contempt. The army was saved in the mountain passes by a knight from Eleanor's native land, one Gilbert, of whom really nothing is known, but who has been made the central figure in a romance in which Eleanor also plays her part.

From Satalia, on the Gulf of Cyprus, the king and Eleanor, with the more well to do among their followers, took ship for Antioch, abandoning the mass of poor

followers to the mercies of the perfidious Greeks and the fierce Turks. In Antioch, Eleanor was received too kindly by her uncle, Raymond, Prince of Antioch, said to have been the handsomest man of his time, and as licentious as Eleanor's own grandfather had been. Despite their relationship, Eleanor's conduct with Raymond made Louis wildly jealous. She was already talking of a separation from Louis. The daughter of William of Poitou certainly could not, as she proclaimed, put up with a monk for her husband; but it is rather amazing to find her pretending that she wishes her marriage dissolved for reasons of conscience, since she and her husband are related within the degrees prohibited by that Church of which she has always been so devout a daughter. Louis carried her off, willy nilly, from Antioch, and we hear nothing more but complaints from him and soothing counsel from his friends until after he and Eleanor returned from this disastrous crusade. Eleanor's caprice and haughty temper had almost driven Louis to despair, and perhaps it was this constant domestic irritant which exacerbated his temper and caused those quarrels with the Emperor Conrad which resulted in the miserable failure of the Christian arms at the very gates of Damascus.

Eleanor returned to France, and continued to give her husband cause of complaint not only by her conduct but by her tongue. Yet the ill-assorted pair lived in marital relations until the winter of 1151–1152. During a journey to Aquitaine, however, a violent rupture occurred. Louis appealed to the Council of Beaugency for a divorce, declaring openly that he did not trust his wife, and could never feel sure of the legitimacy of her issue. But Eleanor, as usual, had been beforehand with him. She, too, appealed for divorce, and her appeal was in the hands of the Council before that of her husband. Less frank and more

politic than Louis, Eleanor sought for an annulment of the marriage on the ground that she and Louis were cousins—they were related in the sixth degree. The Council, which might have been seriously embarrassed by discussing and recognizing such a plea as that of Louis against one of the most powerful princesses of Christendom, discreetly granted Eleanor's plea, and annulled the marriage, March 18, 1152. Louis lost a wife who despised him, and whom he dreaded for her violence and her sharp tongue. France lost all those rich provinces which had come as Eleanor's dower.

The divorced queen, now reigning Duchess of Guienne, was at once pursued by a number of suitors. With all the romance and sentiment said to be characteristic of southern France in her day it is hard to reconcile facts like those that follow. Thibaud de Blois was bent on capturing the rich duchess, and when she refused him, he plotted to capture her, to imprison her in his castle of Blois, and to force her to marry him. Fortunately, Eleanor was warned of the plot and escaped to her own frontier; but here young Geoffrey of Anjou, aged eighteen, laid an ambuscade for her on the Loire, intending to marry her himself. Again she escaped, this time to her own county of Poitou. Into Poitiers she was followed almost at once by Geoffrey's elder brother, Henry Plantagenet. Handsome, masterful, brilliant, Henry was of the very type to captivate Eleanor. It is altogether probable that she had had a previous understanding with him, and had conducted the proceedings for divorce on his advice. At any rate, they were married at Bordeaux on the 1st of May, 1152, in spite of the opposition of Louis as Henry's feudal lord. Two years later Henry succeeded King Stephen, and Eleanor was Queen of England.

A troubadour queen was certainly no fit mate for Louis VII.; and now that Eleanor has secured her divorce

from Louis, and has married a man of temperament somewhat similar to her own, let us step aside from the story of her career in history to tell something more of her relation to the troubadours, and of the troubadours themselves.

Not inheriting any of her grandfather's talent as a singer, Eleanor yet made her court a haven for troubadours. Unfortunately, we know but little of her personal relations with her troubadour courtiers, though tradition has conjectured that they were by no means always platonic. It was after her marriage to Henry Plantagenet, Duke of Normandy, that she became the special protectress of a forlorn troubadour lover, Bernard de Ventadour. He was, as we have noticed, of very low birth, the son of a baker in the Château de Ventadour; but he had risen in his lord's favor by reason of his poetic powers. The fair young Viscountess de Ventadour, a perfect angel of beauty in the eyes of the poet, delighted to listen to his songs of love. At first these songs did not distinctly refer to her; but the allusions became more unequivocal, and the songs became warmer, till one day, as they sat under the shade of a pine tree, Bernard singing to her, the viscountess suddenly kissed her minstrel. The poet tells us in a song that so great was his bliss and ecstasy that the winter landscape seemed suddenly to blossom with all the flowers of spring. And now he sang more openly of love, and at length put the fair lady's own name in his songs as the object of his passion. The viscount could no longer overlook his wife's conduct; so the viscountess was shut up in a tower and Bernard was driven out of the Limousin.

Eleanor gave the banished troubadour a kindly welcome. She listened to his songs, heard his plaintive story, and consoled him. Eleanor was unquestionably a beautiful woman, and at that time she was still in her prime. It is no wonder that the soft heart of the troubadour soon

forgot its grief for the lost Lady de Ventadour in the new love for his gracious protector. Both Eleanor and the troubadour were probably really in love, for she was as susceptible as he, though neither was capable, perhaps, of lasting affection. At any rate, Bernard wrote for her songs full of love and longing, declaring that her image dwells with him always, that in her absence he cannot sleep, and that the mere thought of her is sweeter far than sleep. Henry II. was not himself irreproachable as a husband, and perhaps he thought it wise not to look too closely into what his wife was doing. Just at this time, however, Henry became King of England, and there was no need to urge Eleanor to hasten across the channel to become queen; her vanity was sufficient for that. The new queen and her troubadour were parted, and, says his biographer, from that time Bernard remained sad and woeful. He writes her that, for her sake, he will cross the channel, for he is both a Norman and an Englishman now; but we do not know that the intimacy between them was renewed.

This story is the only one of any detail showing the direct relations between Eleanor and the troubadours. There are, however, a score of other anecdotes which serve to show the relation of other women of her class—not all princesses, but at least of the higher nobility—to the troubadours. As illustrative of the position of women in Provence at this time we may select a story as famous in troubadour annals as that of Francesca da Rimini.

The Lady Margarida de Roussillon, says the Provençal biography, was the "most beautiful lady of her time, and the most prized for all that is praiseworthy, and noble, and courteous." She lived in happiness with her husband, the powerful Baron Raymond de Roussillon. But in her suite was a page, Guillem de Cabestanh, poor, but of noble birth, with whose handsome face and gracious ways

the Lady Margarida fell in love. "Love kindled her thoughts with fire," till at last the passion so overmastered her that she said to Guillem one day: "Guillem, if a lady were to love you, could you love her?" "Certainly, my lady," replied the young man, "if I thought she loved truly." "Well spoken! Tell me, now, can you distinguish true love from counterfeit?"

These questions roused the smouldering love in Guillem's heart, and he gave vent to it in "stanzas graceful and gay, and tunes and canzos, and his songs found favor with all, but most with her for whom he sang." Margarida, indeed, knew that he loved her and that the songs were inspired by her, though Guillem had not as yet ventured to name her in them or to speak to her. Once again she spoke to her timid lover, and he confessed his love. Then began the love story, the troubadour pouring out his sweetest songs and trusting fondly that, because he did not name her, no one would guess their love. But the gossips began to talk of them, till at last the scandal came to the ear of Sir Raymond. "He was ill pleased and hot with rage through having lost the friend he loved so well, and more because of the shame of his spouse." Instead of taking summary vengeance, however, he bided his time till the guilty pair could be self-convicted.

One day when Guillem had gone off hawking alone Margarida saw Raymond hide his sword under his cloak and follow after Guillem. She waited in fearful anxiety till they returned, Raymond apparently in good humor with Guillem and all the world. Raymond told her that he had discovered who was the lady of Guillem's songs. Margarida's terror may be imagined. "I knew," said Raymond, "that no one could sing so well unless he loved. When I conjured him, by his faith, to tell me whom he loved, he evaded me at first, but at length confessed that

it was your sister, Lady Agnes de Tarascon." He then told her that it was all true, moreover, for he had ridden to the Château de Tarascon with Guillem, and that, after some hesitancy, the Lady Agnes had admitted that Guillem was her lover. Margarida was at first dumfounded, and completely incredulous; but her husband's statements were so exact that she was finally convinced of Guillem's faithlessness.

At their first private interview she taxed him with his ingratitude, and would scarcely listen to his denials. Guillem told her that, seeing himself forced into a corner by Raymond's persistent questions, he had named the Lady Agnes in desperation, to prevent immediate discovery and death. The Lady Agnes and her husband, whom she had told of the intrigue, soon confirmed the lover's story. Lady Agnes had seen the distress in Guillem's countenance when Raymond brought him to Tarascon and asked her, in his presence, who was her lover. To save Guillem and her sister, Lady Agnes had admitted that Guillem was her lover, and she and her husband had done all in their power to convince Raymond of this fact. One need hardly remark on the social conditions or the general laxity of morals implied in the naïve recital of such an incident.

To continue Margarida's story, the lovers were reconciled and Guillem celebrated the reconciliation in a song. Unfortunately he had grown rash, and alluded too openly in this song to the very circumstances of their case. "No man," he sang, "suffers greater martyrdom than I; for you, whom I desire more than aught in this world, I must disavow and deny, and lie as if no love were in my heart. Whate'er I do through fear of my life, you must take in good faith, even though you do not see why I do it." This song, some portions of which were violently

amorous, came to the hands of Raymond. He guessed the truth at once, and planned an awful vengeance.

Some days later, as the husband and wife were seated at dinner, the Lady Margarida commented on the delicacy of a bit of deer's heart which she had eaten. "Do you know," said Raymond, "what you have been eating?" "No, but I found it delicious." "This will show you," he said, raising before her the bloody head of Guillem Cabestanh. "Behold the head of the man whose heart you have just eaten!" The lady fainted at the horrible sight, and when she recovered screamed aloud that the heart she had eaten was so good and savory that never more would she eat meat. The maddened husband rushed at her with drawn sword, and she, to escape death at his hands, cast herself out of a window and was dashed to pieces.

The story has a little sequel, not less instructive and enlightening in its way. "The news of the deed spread rapidly, and was received everywhere with grief and indignation; and all the friends of Guillem and the lady, and all the courteous knights of the neighborhood, and all those who were lovers, united to make war against Raymond." King Alphonso of Arragon invaded Raymond's dominions, took him prisoner, kept him in captivity the rest of his days, and divided his property among the relatives of the murdered lovers. The unhappy pair he caused to be buried in one tomb, and erected over them a sumptuous monument, whither once a year came all the knights and all the fond lovers of Roussillon, Cerdagne, and Narbonnais, to pray for the souls of Guillem Cabestanh and the fair Lady Margarida. In the glamor of romance, morality and common decency are apt to be lost sight of. The romancer enlists all our sympathies for the guilty Paolo and Francesca of this story, while Raymond, the miserable

husband, meets with captivity and the loss of his property. We may add that the main facts of this story are confirmed, even to the episode of the heart, by several accounts in manuscripts, though imagination is doubtless responsible for certain details.

In the loves of the troubadours one is constantly encountering stories not less immoral though less tragic than this one, as we may see in the story of the Lady de Miravals. The wife of Raymond de Miravals, a rich baron and famous troubadour, being neglected by her husband, had formed a secret attachment for a knight called Bremon. She was pining in secret for her lover when, to her delight, Raymond threatened to divorce her, because he himself had tired of her and was in love with another lady who insisted that he should divorce his wife. Seeing in the threatened divorce a chance of perfect liberty in her relations with Bremon, the Lady de Miravals pretended extreme grief and indignation. Such treatment from an ungrateful husband she would not stand, she said. She would send for her parents and relatives to see justice done or to take her away. To this Raymond, apparently, made no very determined resistance. The lady, with great show of wrath, sent a messenger to summon her family, secretly directing him to go to Bremon and tell him that she was ready to marry him if he would come. Bremon came with alacrity, accompanied by a troop of his knights, and halted at the gate of the castle. The expectant Lady de Miravals, seeing her lover ready, announced to Raymond that her friends had come for her, and that she would be pleased if he would allow her to leave at once. Raymond consented; in fact, he was so pleased at the prospect of being rid of his wife that, with unwonted courtesy, he himself conducted her to the castle gate. Seeing that her little plot was working so well, the

runaway wife could not forbear adding one more touch to this lovely little deception. "Sir," said she to Raymond, "since we part such good friends, with no regrets, would you not be good enough to give me, no longer your wife, to this gentleman?" Nothing was easier to Raymond than unmarrying a wife of whom he was tired. With ready courtesy he gave her to Bremon, who, receiving her from her husband's hands, put the ring on her finger and rode off, in high glee, with his lady-love.

We do not know whether the Lady de Miravals and her new husband found the course of their love smooth or rough; but the too complaisant Raymond met with very bad luck, which he most richly deserved. As soon as his wife was gone, he posted off to tell his lady-love that her commands had been obeyed and that he had now come to marry her. But this lady, who seems to have cared nothing for the foolish troubadour except to have the honor of having him make a fool of himself for her, said: "It is well done, Raymond; you have sent away your wife to please me. Now go and prepare for a magnificent wedding at your castle, and let me know when you are ready to receive your bride in fitting style." The troubadour rushed home, spent weeks and squandered his substance in preparations for his bride, and went back to claim her. Alas! this very sensible lady had married another man—we hope not a troubadour—on the very day after she had sent Raymond on his fool's errand.

With all his protestations of undying devotion, it not infrequently happened that the troubadour did not continue to devote himself to one lady. Sometimes the lady found a more acceptable lover, or became tired of the love rhapsodies of her troubadour. But it was dangerous to dismiss one of these violent poets without good excuse, for he might turn from love songs to *sirventes,* and satirize

her whom before he had extolled as a paragon. One of the most amusing of the anecdotes of the troubadours is that telling how Marie de Ventadour got rid of the attentions of Gaucelm Faidit.

The beautiful Countess Marie de Ventadour was, says the old Provençal historian quoted in Mr. Rowbotham's *The Troubadours and Courts of Love,* to which we are indebted for many of the facts here used, "the most esteemed lady in the province of Limousin; the lady who prided herself most on doing whatever was right and good, and who best preserved and defended herself from all evil; who always shaped her conduct by the rules of reason, and never at any time committed an act of folly." Her charms were celebrated by many a troubadour, but her most devoted admirer was Gaucelm Faidit. Gaucelm, the son of an artisan of Uzerche, had been raised from his low estate by the favor of the troubadour Richard Cœur de Lion, and his talent had assured his position in what one might call the best society. Marie, like other ladies of her time, was rather vain of her troubadour admirers, and did not disdain the brilliant but lowborn Gaucelm Faidit. But she told him that, if he was to win her love, he must show himself worthy of it by prowess in battle, and suggested that he accompany her husband—whom we neglected to mention before—on the third Crusade, just then being organized. The poet, though not very fond of fighting, took the Cross, went to the Holy Land, sent home to his lady-love most ferocious poems telling of the perils he was encountering or escaping, and then made his way back to the Château de Ventadour as soon as he could find a decent excuse for doing so. Marie, however, was not so gracious to him as he had hoped; she did not love him for the dangers he had passed, or for his telling of them. She was, in fact, decidedly cold to him. Gaucelm, in a rage, left

the château, saying: "I shall never see you again! But perhaps I can find another lady who will treat me with more consideration." Marie was rather glad to be rid of her poet's tempestuous love; but she was afraid of his sharp tongue; he could write most bitter *sirventes:* what if he should avenge himself on her by turning against her all his satiric powers?

In this dilemma she resorted to a stratagem which her friend, Madame de Malamort helped her to put in practice. Madame de Malamort sent a message to the troubadour asking: "Which do you prefer, a little bird in the hand, or a crane flying high in the air?" Gaucelm's curiosity was piqued; he came to ask her to unravel this riddle. "I am the little bird," said she, "whom you hold in your hand, and Marie de Ventadour is the crane who flies far above your head. Am I not as beautiful as she? Love me who love you, and let this haughty countess find out, as she will, what a treasure she has lost." The vanity of the troubadour, incensed by what he thought unjust treatment, could not withstand this artful attack. He consented to be off with the old love, and the new love required that he take leave of the old love, not in any violent *sirvente,* but in a poem relentless, stern, yet calm and dignified; after which he might begin to sing as he pleased about the new love. Too proud of his new conquest to suspect the trick being played on him, Gaucelm bade farewell to Marie de Ventadour in a formal and very dignified fashion. When he turned now to sing of joy and spring and the like to Madame de Malamort he found his attentions very coldly received; and the lady soon gave him to understand that, having got her friend out of a difficulty, she cared not a fig for any troubadour. Gaucelm was nicely trapped; he could not indulge in abuse of either lady without danger of having the whole foolish tale told

at his expense. He became a heretic toward love, and satirized women in general; but he soon recovered from this, and lived to be consoled by other ladies, and to be fooled by one more. This one, Marguerite d'Aubusson, pretending the most devoted and innocent romantic love for Gaucelm, used to meet her real lover under cover of Gaucelm's roof.

Though not at all essential to the story, it is a fact worth mentioning that Gaucelm Faidit himself was married while the romance with Marie was in progress. The wife of a troubadour, indeed, was not allowed to interfere with any really serious business of his career, such as a love affair with another man's wife. That this was so, in theory at least, can be seen in the story of the lives of many of the troubadours; and that the general attitude of Provençal society, as represented by this particular phase of its literature, was unfavorable to matrimony, can be seen most clearly when we look at those curious institutions called Courts of Love. It is not yet quite certain whether the Courts of Love are altogether or only partly mythical.

This century of ours is a Sancho Panza among the centuries; like that stout and excellent squire, we have unlimited faith in things material, visible, tangible, and especially eatable—and no faith in things romantic, such as windmills, and knights-errant, and chivalry. Looked at from the Panza-ic point of view, which we are fain to admit is also the common-sense point of view, it seems inherently most improbable that any set of people should waste their time upon anything so fantastic as the Courts of Love. Yet Panza should be asked to remember that there are and have been things in heaven and earth that surpass the limits of his philosophy; that the race among whom such institutions are alleged to have flourished was

notoriously sentimental, or poetic, if you like a more respectful term; that, for a parallel, he has only to go to a famous French romance, published less than two centuries ago, which contained a grave description and map of the Country of Love, a *Carte du pays de Tendre,* with minute directions as to how the amorous traveller might proceed safely on his journey to the city of true love; and that Molière's *Précieuses Ridicules,* however overdrawn for comic effect, presents a picture of what really existed. Reason is, undoubtedly, opposed to the possibility of the existence of the Courts of Love; but, as we have said, we cannot always refuse to believe what seems to us preposterous. The historical evidence for the existence of the Courts of Love is unquestionably very scanty. Mr. Rowbotham, who believes firmly in their existence, is forced to rely upon the testimony of one contemporary witness, of very uncertain date (Andrew the Chaplain, "who lived probably about the end of the twelfth century"), and two very obscure allusions to courts and trials in the poems of the troubadours. The chief sources for our knowledge of the Courts of Love are writers long subsequent to the events, notably Jean de Nostredame, who, in 1575, published a book entitled *Les Vies des plus célèbres et anciens poëtes provensaux.* But the tradition is so well established, and above all so intimately associated with Queen Eleanor, that we shall give a little sketch of the courts and their doings.

The *tensons* of the troubadours were poetic disputes on points of love and on lovers' conduct. If, says Jean de Nostredame, the disputants "could not come to an agreement, they referred the matter for decision to the illustrious lady presidents who held open and plenary court at the Castle of Signe, and other places, and these gave judgments which were called the judgments of Love." If a lady treated her troubadour lover unfairly, or if a

lover were guilty of any dereliction or crime in love, or if, for the guidance of future generations of lovers, a decision on a mere point of gallantry were sought, all such cases came before the Courts of Love, which had a regular code of laws, thirty-one in number, upon which decisions were based. The court, composed of a jury of the most beautiful, accomplished, and celebrated ladies of the neighborhood, and presided over by some lady of special distinction, heard the pleas on both sides, and gave judgment, which depended upon a unanimous vote of the jury. There were several of these courts, the most famous being those of Queen Eleanor of England, of her daughter, Marie de Champagne, of the Viscountess of Narbonne, and of the Countess of Flanders. The code under which these fantastic tribunals are said to have given their judgment is a very curious document. The statutes of love are hardly so rigorous as might be expected; some of them are merely proverbial bits of wisdom, with here and there a hint very far from romantic:

IV. Love never stands still; it always increases—or diminishes.

X. Love is always an exile where avarice holds his dwelling.

Some seem so distinctly suggestive of a smirk beneath all this affected seriousness that one can hardly take them seriously.

XV. Every lover is accustomed to grow pale at the sight of his lady-love.

XVI. At the sudden and unexpected sight of his lady-love the heart of the true lover invariably palpitates.

XX. A real lover is always the prey of anxiety and *malaise*.

XXIII. A person who is the prey of love eats little and sleeps little.

This last is, of course, a rule not only venerable, but universal. One recalls Chaucer's Squire, "as fresshe as is the moneth of May," who "coude songes make, and wel endite; . . . so hote he loved that by nightertale he slep no more than doth the nightingale." Others of the troubadour statutes are frankly suggestive of that moral laxity, not to say obliquity of vision, of which we have spoken before.

I. Marriage cannot be pleaded as an excuse for refusing to love.

XI. It is not becoming to love those ladies who love only with a view to marriage.

XXVI. Love can deny nothing to love.

With this little group of laws in mind one can but reflect that, pushed to their logical conclusion, they are suggestive of moral laxity. We are not, however, left to guessing. According to Andrew the Chaplain, the court of the Countess of Champagne was asked, on April 29, 1174, to decide this question: "Can real love exist between married people?" The countess and her court decided "that love cannot exercise its powers on married people," the following reason being given in proof of the assertion: "Lovers grant everything, mutually and gratuitously, without being constrained by any motive of necessity. Married people, on the contrary, are compelled as a duty to submit to one another's wishes, and not to refuse anything to one another. For this reason it is evident that love cannot exercise its powers on married people. Let this decision, which we have arrived at with great deliberation, and after taking counsel of a large number of ladies, be held henceforward as a confirmed and irrefragable truth."

Quite in line with this judgment is one reported from the court of Queen Eleanor. A gentleman, the complainant in the suit, was deeply in love with a lady who

loved another. Taking compassion on him, however, she promised that, if ever she should lose her first lover, the complainant should be received as his successor. The lady shortly after married her lover. Thereupon the complainant, citing the decision of the Countess of Champagne, demanded her love. The lady refused, denying that she had lost the love of her lover by marrying him. Wherefore the complainant humbly sued for judgment, we presume it might be called a writ *mandamus amare*. The honorable court handed down a decision for the complainant, declaring that the solemn decree of the court of the Countess of Champagne was of force in the present case, and issuing the writ *mandamus amare* as prayed for: "We order that the lady grant to her imploring lover, now the complainant before this court, the favors which he so earnestly entreats, and which she so faithfully has promised."

One other decision of the gay Queen Eleanor is so righteous that we cannot forbear repeating it. A gentleman brought suit because a lady of whom he was enamored had accepted numerous handsome gifts from him and yet persistently denied him her love. We are not altogether sure whether the gentleman was not really bringing suit to recover his presents; but Queen Eleanor gave judgment: "A lady who is determined to be inflexible must either refuse to receive any gifts which are sent with the object of winning her love, or she must make compensation for them, or she must be content to be classed as a courtesan."

In all this world of love and song were the women merely objects of the troubadour's song, or merely patronesses of the troubadour? Were there no poetesses? The names of fourteen ladies who may be called troubadours by reason of their own works are all of whom we have

record, and even of these fourteen not one was really a professional troubadour; in most cases it is but one song, or even one part of a *tenson*, which gives the lady a right to be named among the poets. We find Clara D'Anduse, the beautiful love of the troubadour Uc de St. Cyr, remembered for but one song; and but little more remains of the work of Countess Beatrice de Die, who loved Rambaut d'Orange, and who tells of how this troubadour loved her, and grew cold to her, and finally was faithless, forsaking her for another; but she and her sister troubadours are shadowy figures: the time had not come for woman to take a permanent place in literature.

In our attempt to present the literary and artistic side of Eleanor's life, and to tell something of the brilliant society of Provence in which she played no small part, we have neglected the facts of her career in England. As Queen Eleanor of England, however, we shall not have much to say of her. Even now she does not play a very prominent part in history, and the development of her character is quite in line with the moral training one would acquire in the Courts of Love. It does seem as if there were such a thing as reaping the whirlwind.

Eleanor was eleven years older than her new husband. She had despised Louis because he was too austere, too cold, too plain in mind and in morals. Her new husband soon gave her ample cause to develop a new passion—jealousy. She learned to hate him for vices the very opposite of Louis's colorless virtue. She herself had been notoriously a coquette, and not an innocent one. She felt the eleven years of difference between herself and Henry. The gossips said she could hardly expect to retain Henry's affection, she who was so much older, and who had been, it was rumored, the mistress of Henry's own father. Despite the gallant principles she had professed in her

own Court of Love, despite the latitude to which she had thought herself entitled, she became furiously jealous of Henry. There was, indeed, much reason for jealousy. Young, hot-blooded, passionate, as greedy of pleasure as of power, Henry lost no time in giving her numerous rivals. No means were too vile or too violent when Henry wished to gratify his passions. It is said that he even dishonored the young Princess Alice of France, betrothed to his son Richard, and for that reason would never allow Richard to marry her. There were fierce quarrels between Eleanor and Henry, and tradition has ascribed to her the murder of Fair Rosamond Clifford, whom she is said to have pursued into the labyrinth of Woodstock and stabbed with her own hand.

Finding it impossible to avenge herself in any other way, Eleanor stirred up her sons against their father. They were all turbulent enough, and needed little encouragement. The eldest living son, Henry, injudiciously crowned king by his father's desire, persuaded himself that he must be king in deed, and was spurred on by his mother and by her friend, the restless troubadour Bertrand de Born. Raymond of Toulouse, who had been sought by them as an ally, revealed the plot of the queen and her sons to Henry. Young Henry and his brothers fled to France, where they were received by Louis with royal honors. Eleanor was imprisoned in her own duchy, and in prison she remained during Henry's lifetime. The troubadours, devoted to their duchess, sang dolorous songs upon her captivity, and voiced their hatred of her jailer, Henry, in burning *sirventes*. But Henry went on relentlessly in the intermittent struggle with his sons, conquered Bertrand de Born, and kept his rebellious subjects in check. Not till he died, cursing Richard and John, who had again been in revolt against him, was the queen released.

Hardly had Richard been crowned before he departed for the Crusade, leaving Eleanor as regent. Even against her own son the old queen intrigued; yet it was partly her indignant intervention which later helped to release Richard from the German prison where the emperor, instigated by Philip Augustus, would have kept him. The son whom she loved best, John, loved and trusted her no more than did Richard. In the struggle between Philip Augustus, championing Arthur of Brittany, and John, Eleanor seems to have kept faith with her son, and to have given him shrewd if cruel counsel. We hear of her but once or twice more in active affairs. In 1200 she was sent by John into Spain to bring back his niece, Blanche de Castille, who was betrothed to Prince Louis of France by one of the terms of a treaty just concluded between John and Philip Augustus. On her return, when passing through Bordeaux, a mob set upon and killed one of her party, the detested Mercader, captain of Richard's Brabançon mercenaries. Eleanor, old, and sick with fatigue and fright at this scene of horror, could proceed no further, and stayed in the abbey of Fontevrault, sending Blanche on with the Archbishop of Bordeaux. She rallied from this illness, however, and two years later had a narrow escape from being captured by her grandson, Arthur. She was besieged, and very hard pressed, in the Château de Mirebeau, when Arthur and his followers were surprised and captured by John. This episode of a grandmother besieged by her own grandson is quite in line with the traditions of the family. "It is the fate of our family that none should love the other," said Geoffrey Plantagenet.

In the midst of the triumph of Philip Augustus over her miserable son John, old Queen Eleanor died, in the convent of Beaulieu, in 1204. The miseries of her declining years make us more charitable toward her; but it is

impossible to respect a character such as that of England's troubadour queen. One sometimes finds her praised for a splendid virtue, that of impulsive generosity; but there was no generosity in her nature; she was merely lavish in spending for her own pleasure. In keeping with what a great historian has said of her son Richard Cœur de Lion, one may say that she was a bad wife,—to two husbands,—a bad mother, and a bad queen. There was in her nature none of the tenderness which alone can ensure domestic love, nor yet enough force to enable her to make herself a great queen.

Even before the death of their patroness the glories of the troubadours were fading. There was an angry murmur, growing ever stronger, against the immorality of the troubadours, and particularly against a new and formidable heresy which had gained ground rapidly in the south of France. With the doctrines of the Albigenses we are not concerned; it is difficult to discover the exact truth about them, since we must rely chiefly upon the testimony of their enemies. It is sufficiently well established, however, that the Albigenses believed in a form of Manichæism which asserted the existence of two Eternal powers, equipotent, the one a power of Good, the other a power of Evil. Since Evil ruled the world on equal terms with Good, might not man feel utterly relieved of moral responsibility? Certainly, such is the tendency of this species of Dualism.

Whether the Albigensian heresy be responsible or not, it is unquestionable that the troubadours were in nearly all cases indifferent, and in very many cases sceptical or utterly rebellious, in their attitude toward the Church and its teachings. Among the nobility the sacrament of marriage, so carefully hedged about by the canons of the Church, could hardly have been regarded with much

respect, since a venal clergy was ready to sanction a union which their own Church pronounced incestuous or to dissolve one which their own Church pronounced indissoluble. Political and racial antipathy, the old ineradicable and inexplicable hatred of north for south, helped on the religious quarrel. Count Raymond of Toulouse, who seems to have been merely an easy-going man, inclined rather to religious liberty and freedom of conscience than to positive heresy, was assailed as a monster of vice. At length, in 1208, Pope Innocent III. authorized the Cistercian monks to preach a crusade against the Albigenses: "Arise! ye soldiers of Christ! exterminate this impiety by every means that God may reveal to you. Stretch forth your arms and smite the heretics, making upon them war more relentless than upon the Saracens." So ran the papal letters. The new crusade was preached far and wide over France, Germany, and Italy, and a host of crusaders, promised greater indulgences than those who went to the Holy Land, assembled to destroy Provence. Among their leaders were two recreant troubadours, Izarn, who leaves us his version of the fall of Provence, and Folquet, now Bishop of Toulouse, who is so cruel, so bitter, so treacherous in the cause of Christ that one enjoys hearing him called by the troubadour nickname "Bishop of Devils." More terrible than Folquet, because more sincere, was one Domingo, canon of Osma, a man of almost puritanic habits of mind, famous in history as the founder of the order of *Fratres Predicatores*, the Dominican Preaching Friars, and of an institution not less well known—the Inquisition. The military leader who really broke the back of the resistance in Provence was Simon de Montfort. The siege and capture of Béziers, where a number of those accused of heresy had taken refuge, will serve to show in what spirit the whole war was conducted. When

Béziers was taken the soldiers asked Abbot Arnold, of Citeaux, who represented the Church of Mercy: "How shall we distinguish the faithful from the heretics among the people of the town?" The priest answered: *Caedite eos, novit enim Dominus qui sunt ejus:* "Kill them all, for the Lord will know His own." In this spirit the Albigensian war continued, with occasional respites, for more than thirty years. Over the land of the troubadours brooded the menacing figure of the Inquisition; and fair women no less than men knew the sinister meaning of "*La Question*"—the inquisition by torture, by scores of devices of ingenious cruelty, of which the "rack" and the iron "boot" are best remembered. The brilliant life of the south was extinguished. We hear the piteous wail of the fast disappearing singers: "Oh! Toulouse and Provence, land of Agen, Béziers, and Carcassonne; as I have seen you, and as I see you now!"

While Provençal literature was thus perishing miserably, that of France was gradually unfolding; and we find here and there some *grande dame* named as a patroness of literature. Most of them are but names, yet we find that the Countess Marie de Champagne, Queen Eleanor's daughter, encouraged the great *trouvère* Chrestien de Troies. She made him introduce into his romances the notions of love and chivalry fostered in the Courts of Love, and gave him the theme of his romance of *Lancelot,* or *Le conte de la Charrette* (about 1170). For Blanche de Navarre was made a prose translation of saints' lives. A poet named Menessier completed, about 1220, for the Countess Jeanne de Flandre a poem on Perceval and his search for the Holy Grail.

One French woman of this period, moreover, won for herself an abiding place in literature. Of her personality we know nothing, and we are even ignorant of the dates of her birth and death. Gathering her materials from Welsh and Breton traditions and popular

songs, she wrote a number of *lays*, as she called them. These lays are short poems, in verse of eight syllables, recounting some little romantic tale or adventure. There are about twenty of them, of which fifteen, at least, are ascribed to Marie. From another of her works we glean the few facts that follow, substantially all that we know of her:

"At the end of this work, which I have translated and sung in the Romance tongue (French), I will tell you something of myself. Marie is my name, and I am of France. It may be that several clerks might take it upon themselves to claim my work, and I wish none to say it is his: who forgets himself works to no purpose. For the love of Count William, the most valiant man in this kingdom, I undertook to write this book and to translate it from English into Romance. He who wrote this book, or translated it, called it Ysopet. He translated it from Greek into Latin. King Henry (some manuscripts say Alfred), who loved it greatly, then translated it into English, and I have turned it into French verse as accurately as I could. Now I pray to God Almighty that I may be given strength to do such work that I may give my soul into His hands, that it may go straight to Heaven above. Say Amen, all of you, that God may grant my prayer."

This conclusion of one of the fables in the book called *Ysopet,* which we have translated freely, shows us that Marie was of French birth, but that she had, probably, lived for a time in England. Who was Count William? We are free to guess, but there seems no chance of confirming the guess. Some have supposed him to be William Longsword, the reputed son of Henry II. and Rosamond; while Henry, the king who loved the book so well, might be Henry Beauclerc. But as the English book from which Marie translated is lost, there is again no chance

of confirmation. It is now generally agreed, however, that Marie lived and wrote about the end of the reign of Henry II.

Ysopet, or *Ysope,* as it is sometimes spelled, is nothing more than the name of our dear old Æsop, whom childhood loves and whom folklore is proving a myth. The term came to be the generic one in Old French for collections of fables on the model of Marie's. Marie's fables cannot compete with those of her great French successor, La Fontaine; and yet one is always insensibly comparing them with his. The literary value of her works is not great; the recital is too cold and impersonal; there is too much of the apologue and none of that delightful individuality, the reflection of his own mind, which La Fontaine manages to impress upon his creatures; the writer shows no sympathy with the "little people" of her fables.

The lays are decidedly more entertaining, and show considerable narrative power, as well as an unconscious appreciation of the romantic beauty of the incidents, many of which have to do with fairies and enchantment. They are tales of love and adventure, full of marvels. One meets King Arthur and Tristram, and a host of knights and ladies transformed by the fairies. We may mention the pathetic *Lai de Frêne,* a story related to the famous one of *Patient Grissel;* the story of *Guingamor,* a tale of a knight who lives three days in fairyland and comes back to find that three hundred years had passed on earth; and the story of the werewolf Bisclavret, which we may give as a specimen of this very interesting portion of Old French literature—interesting, at least, to those who love literature in its infancy.

"When I set out to write lays," says Marie, "I would not forget Bisclavret. In Breton he is called Bisclavret, while the Normans call him *garwalf* (werewolf)." We

have heard often enough, she continues, of men who became werewolves and lived in the forest. The werewolf is a savage beast, and when he is in a rage he devours men and does much damage. After this little preface, the tale goes on to tell of a knight of Brittany, courteous, rich, beloved by all his neighbors. His wife, however, was piqued by unreasoning curiosity about one thing, which was quite enough, indeed, to arouse the curiosity of any wife. This was the fact that for three days out of the week her husband disappeared, no one knew whither. At length, she asked her husband where he went, and, in spite of his reluctance to tell,

> "tant le blandi e losenia
> Que s'aventure li cunta,"

that is, she wheedled and coaxed him till he told her that on three days of the week he must be a werewolf; that, going to the forest, he stripped himself and hid his clothing carefully, and then was turned into a wolf. He besought her not to reveal the hiding place of his clothing; for if, when the three days were over, he should come back in wolf form and find them gone, there would be no hope for him: he must be a wolf for the rest of his days. Now, the wife, as usually happens in such tales, was a wicked wife, anxious to rid herself of her werewolf husband and marry a knight who had long been her lover:

> "Un chevalier de la cuntree,
> Qui lungement l'aveit amee . . .
> E mult dune en sun servise."

To him she sends at once, and the guilty pair steal away the clothes of the poor werewolf at the very first opportunity. And thus was Bisclavret betrayed by his wife, who married him who had loved her long. The werewolf

is condemned to continue in wolf form; but one must remember that there are disenchantments as well as enchantments in fairy stories, and that justice, of a kind which is frequently *sui generis*, is generally meted out to the guilty. The giant, it is true, gobbles up people and behaves horribly for a season, but there is always a giant killer in training for him. And so here, it is only for "one whole year" that Bisclavret remains transformed; for the king goes hunting in the forest, and his hounds pursue Bisclavret till the poor wretch runs straight to the feet of the king, kisses his feet, and asks mercy in such pitiful and almost human dumb show that the king orders him spared.

Bisclavret, taken under royal protection, accompanies the court everywhere, till, on the occasion of a special assemblage of the barons, the man who had married his wife comes into his presence. Straight at his throat leapt the wolf-man, and would have torn him to pieces on the spot had not the king interfered. The obvious hatred of the wolf for this particular man aroused the king's suspicions, and these suspicions were still further intensified when, not long after, the wolf manifested the same violent hatred toward his former wife, now the wife of the knight, biting her and scratching her face in spite of all that could be done. Then, upon the advice of an old knight who remembered the mysterious disappearance of Bisclavret and who knew something of Breton legends, the king put the false wife to torture, and forced from her the confession of the truth. Bisclavret, shut up in a room with the clothes he had worn as a man, is transformed into a man once more and reinstated in his possessions. The unfaithful wife, accompanied by her paramour, is driven from the land, and, as a further retribution, several of her children were born without noses, the wolf having bitten off her

nose. As Marie concludes, with triumphant rejoicing in the punishment of the wicked even unto the third and fourth generation, "'tis true, indeed, noseless were they born, and noseless did they live."

This paraphrase of Marie's work can, of course, give no idea of its literary value; but the tale itself will serve as a sample of what the first woman in French literature wrote. We have from her also a translation of the famous legend of *Saint Patrick's Purgatory*, of how a knight journeyed into the lower regions and came back to warn the world of the punishments in store for the wicked. Marie represents but a beginning—and yet it is a beginning—of the writing in their mother tongue, which was to make famous many women as well as men of France. In her day, indeed, it was a distinction to write in the mother tongue, for among the classes which we should call literary Latin was considered the only proper vehicle for their wisdom. Long after her day, indeed, Latin still kept French from its birthright, and it will be two centuries before we come to another woman who writes in French. Though the great Héloïse and her letters, written not long before Marie's time, take their place in literature, it is in the literature of scholastic Latin, not of old French.

Chapter IV

Women in the Age of Saint Louis

IV

WOMEN IN THE AGE OF SAINT LOUIS

WHILE romance has preserved many memories, and history not a few facts, of Eleanor of Guienne, the records concerning two other notable women, her contemporaries, are very scanty. Whatever her faults, Eleanor was a great and commanding personality, one that could not be overlooked because, whether for good or ill, she was always powerful. The two unhappy queens of Philippe Auguste, Ingeburge de Danemark and Agnès de Méranie, though they were the innocent causes of much distress in France, are yet hardly known to us as personalities.

The first queen of Philippe Auguste was Isabelle de Hainault; after her death he sought the hand of a Danish princess, Ingeburge, sister of Knut IV. The marriage was one contracted for political reasons; Philippe was at the time engaged in his lifelong struggle against the power of the Plantagenets, and desired an ally against Richard Cœur de Lion. At Amiens, on Assumption eve, 1193, Ingeburge was married to the King of France; the next day she was crowned Queen of France by the Archbishop of Rheims. During the ceremony, says a chronicler of Aix, "the King, looking on the Princess, began to conceive a horror of her; he trembled, he grew pale, he was so greatly troubled in spirit that he could hardly contain himself till the end of the ceremony." For some unknown

reason the fair stranger seems to have awakened in him unconquerable repugnance; and from that moment he began to devise means of getting rid of her.

Ingeburge, according to the testimony of those who had no special reason to favor her but every reason to justify the king, was of a gentle disposition, sensible, affectionate, and endowed with considerable beauty of the type usually associated with Danish women. She was a defenceless stranger, not even acquainted with the French language, and there were but few in France to champion her cause in the painful complications that followed. Philippe's aversion could by no means be accounted for; in the Middle Ages what could not be accounted for, if of evil nature, was the work of the devil or of his vicegerents on earth, the witches; so it was promptly reported that the King of France was bewitched, though it is not exactly apparent that the real force of the enchantment fell upon him—it was Ingeburge who suffered.

Philippe began proceedings to obtain an annulment of the marriage, which, he asseverated, had never been consummated. This was denied by Ingeburge, and we are inclined to take her word rather than that of the unscrupulous king, who, though a successful ruler, was not at all averse to falsehood where falsehood served his turn. The pair separated almost at once, and Philippe tried by ill treatment to make Ingeburge consent to a legal separation. After three months of the utmost unhappiness the young queen had the shame of hearing her marriage declared null and void. The council which rendered this decision consisted wholly of French prelates, presided over by the very Archbishop of Rheims who had pronounced the nuptial benediction over the pair. Ingeburge was at Compiègne, where the council met, and was present at the session at which her marriage was annulled on the

DOMESTIC INTERIOR IN FRANCE, TWELFTH CENTURY

From a water-color by S. Baron, after a description by Viollet-le-Duc

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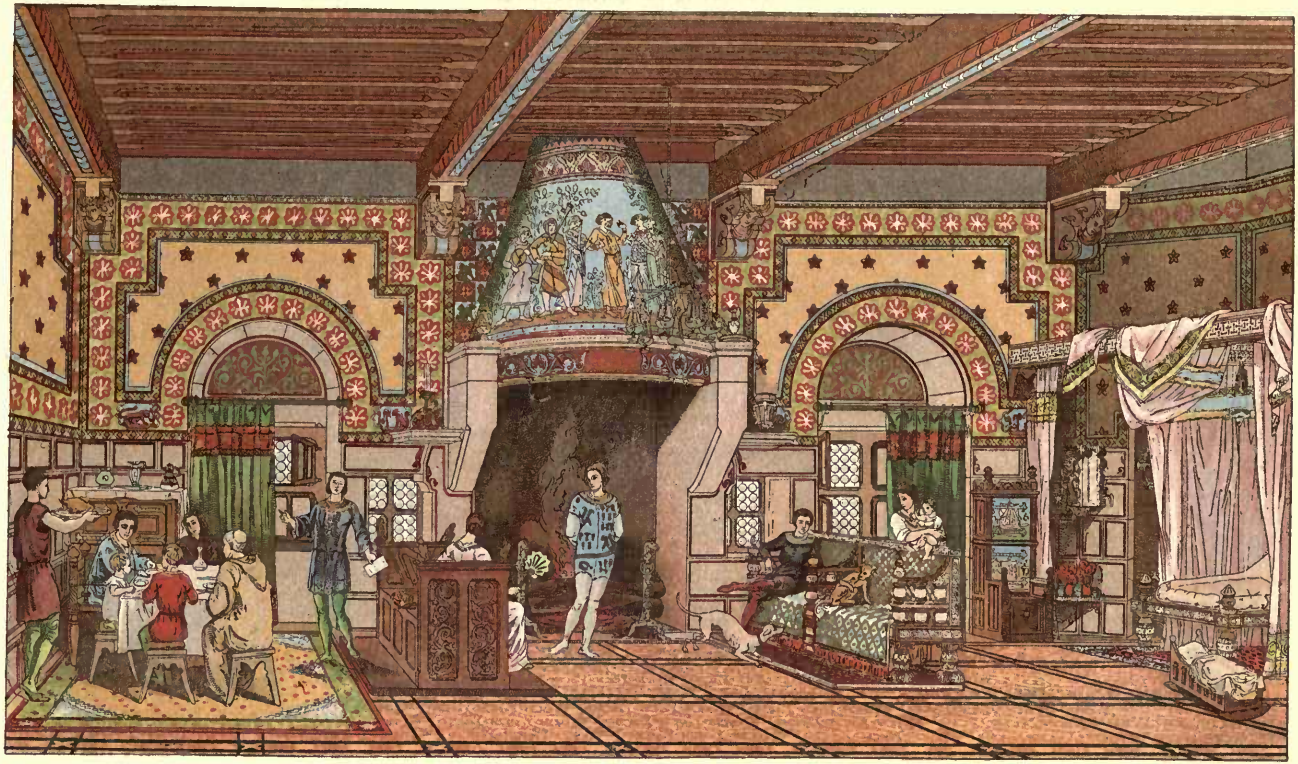
The decorated fireplace, between two windows, was wide enough to hold logs eight or ten feet long. Two large benches were at right angles, one with a movable back, the other being double-seated. The table was fixed to the floor, the master's chair being elevated, other diners sat on stools. The tablecloth was used for wiping fingers and lips. The buffet, with cups and goblets on top, was used as to-day. Generally, the beds were narrow and displayed great luxury: the wood was carved, incrusted, or painted; the coverlets had fringes and embroideries; curtains formed an alcove, and a night lamp was hung at the foot. The room contained an oratory.

In the rear were the kitchen, etc., and on the upper floors were sleeping and other chambers.



frivolous pretext of a kinship, not between Philippe and Ingeburge—for even the ingenuity of mediæval genealogy could not trace out that—but between the late Queen Isabelle and Ingeburge. The unfortunate Danish lady could not understand what these priests were saying in the strange tongue of the land to which she had come to be a queen; when the purport of the proceedings was explained to her through an interpreter, she exclaimed, in tears: "*Male France! Male France!* Rome! Rome!"

She did indeed appeal from "wicked France" to Rome, and the appeal was not without ultimate good effect. In the meantime she refused to prejudice her cause by returning to Denmark, and the heartless Philippe confined her, almost as a criminal, in a convent at Cisoing, in the Tournois; he did not even have the decency or the humanity to provide suitably for her actual needs.

The appeal to Rome was pushed by Ingeburge's brother, Knut IV., and the Pope, Celestine III., at length granted the appeal, on March 13, 1196, reversing the decree of the council of Compiègne. The papal power was then in very weak hands, and it was fear of offending the great King of France that had occasioned the long delay in rendering justice to Ingeburge. That something more than a mere papal decree would be needed to subdue Philippe was apparent when, in June, 1196, he married Agnès de Méranie, the lovely daughter of a German prince who, under the title of Duke of Méranie, ruled the Tyrol, Istria, and a part of Bohemia. The papal menaces had not deterred the king from this insolent act of disobedience; and Pope Celestine made no attempt to coerce him by resort to more rigorous measures. Ingeburge continued to live in confinement, while Philippe enjoyed the love of his new wife, against whom no one could lay the guilt of her husband's licentious conduct.

In January, 1198, Pope Celestine was succeeded by Innocent III., one of the greatest of the occupants of the chair of St. Peter. He was of an inflexible character, not to be turned aside by any considerations of policy or of humanity from what he conceived to be his duty; and his duty it was, and his right, according to his idea, to dominate the world and the kings thereof. When the friends of Ingeburge called her case to his attention, Pope Innocent wrote letter after letter of remonstrance to Philippe Auguste, "the eldest son of the Church," summoning him to return to the paths of duty and relinquish his "concubine," Agnès de Méranie. He urged Philippe's spiritual adviser to bring him to reason by pious exhortation. All else failing, he sent Cardinal Pierre of Capua as a special legate, with injunctions to present the Church's ultimatum to the king: he must either take Ingeburge back at once, with all honor, as his lawful consort, or the entire kingdom would be put under interdict. The legate pleaded and threatened in vain; after a year of exasperating evasion the king was still not obedient. The legate at last summoned a council and pronounced the interdict, all the prelates receiving stringent orders to observe it under pain of suspension. From December, 1199, to September, 1200, France was under a general interdict.

In the case of Bertha and Robert, the ecclesiastical censures had affected only the guilty couple; in the case of Bertrade and Philippe I., only the places inhabited by them had been smitten. But the Church had now grown stronger; now the whole kingdom was to suffer because of the recalcitrant king. Everywhere religious services ceased, for the clergy were in sympathy with or afraid of the vigorous statesman now in the papal chair. The churches were closed, the altars dismantled, the crosses reversed, the bells silent, as during the solemn days in

memory of Christ's Passion. The accustomed religious exercises ceased; but that was only a small part of the horror, for no more sacraments, save extreme unction and baptism of infants, could be celebrated. There were no marriages: when the king wished to marry his son to the young Blanche de Castille he was obliged to go into Normandy, into English territory, to have the ceremony performed. There were no more funerals, for the Pope forbade burials, whether in hallowed or in unhallowed ground: the air was filled with the pestilential stench from unburied corpses. The voice of the people rose in wrath against their impious king; it was he who was bringing all this woe upon the land. Philippe and Agnès lived on, she happy in the love of her king, and in her children, Philippe and Marie, he stubbornly resistant. He deprived bishops of their sees and sequestered their goods; he punished even laymen for daring to take the side of the Pope. But at last he must yield, for his people would endure no more.

Ingeburge was taken back as wife and queen, being at last released from the château of Etampes where she had been confined. But the king, deeply in love with Agnès, declared that this recognition of Ingeburge was only provisional, since he meant to appeal once more to Rome for an annulment of the marriage. The fair Agnès, the victim of these unfortunate circumstances, did not long survive the separation from Philippe, whose passionate love she returned. A few weeks later she died at Poissi, giving birth to a short-lived son named Tristan, the pledge of his mother's sorrows. She had given Philippe two children before this, and, though her union with the king had been stigmatized as immoral by the Church, the Pope recognized the legitimacy of the offspring in November, 1201. It was her son Philippe, surnamed Hurepel, who became

Count de Boulogne, and played no pleasing rôle under Blanche de Castille.

The death of Agnès de Méranie did not tend to soften Philippe's feelings toward Ingeburge. She was imprisoned anew, and treated with every indignity that could be devised, short of calling down again the wrath of Pope Innocent. For eleven years she was treated in this way, and was constantly urged, by entreaties and threats, to take the veil, while Philippe was continuing his efforts to have the marriage annulled. In 1212, however, Philippe had need of the friendship of Rome. Ingeburge was again taken from her prison at Etampes and received at court: the victory of the Pope was complete, as far as the letter of the law was concerned. There was never any love between the royal pair, and could not be; for between them stood the sad ghost of Agnès de Méranie to incite Ingeburge to jealousy and Philippe to fresh aversion.

Ingeburge could never have been happy with Philippe, though he treated her more considerately and fairly during the last years of his life. When her husband died, in 1223, and his son Louis VIII. came to the throne, Ingeburge was nearer peace than she had been since she left her native land. We hear, henceforth, almost nothing of her; there was no rôle for a dowager queen, especially one who was a foreigner associated with most distressing events for France. We do find her name as one of the notabilities in the solemn procession which, on August 2, 1224, went from the cathedral of Notre Dame to the Abbey of St. Antoine, to ask of the Lord of Hosts for a victory for the arms of Louis VIII. at Rochelle. Now and again her name occurs in the accounts of the royal household while that careful economist, Blanche de Castille, is governing France. She is called "la reine d'Orléans," because she lived at Orleans, part of the domain reserved

to her as Queen Dowager. Here she lived quietly, and let us hope not unhappily, till her death in 1237. She lived in the midst of great events in which she could take no part; and only her sorrows have preserved for us this fragment of her story.

Before we begin the history of the greatest queen France had yet seen, Blanche de Castille, it might be well to note some of the changes in social conditions since the age of the early Capetians. These changes were, fortunately, all in the direction of amelioration; for the civilization of France, of Europe, was taking long strides during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and an advance in civilization involves an improvement in the condition of women. Historians usually look at the matter from the point of view of man; it must be our endeavor to treat of social conditions and their causes rather from the point of view of woman.

Glancing at the history of France for a moment, it is easy enough to distinguish certain causes or motive forces in the advance in civilization. Because it is usually quite overlooked, we shall name first the influence of contact with that very society of Provence which France was bending her energies to bring to utter ruin. Unquestionably the *trouvères* of northern France owed something of their art to the *troubadours* of southern France, even if the former were more than mere imitators. The softening effect of the musical and literary arts professed by these poets need not be dwelt upon, but we might remark that it was to the ladies of France, in most cases, that the *trouvères* sang, and that this conversion of the bard, singing the glories of his chief, into the minstrel, still singing of battles but also of fair ladies and for the ears of fair ladies, is a fact not lacking significance. Woman was no longer the mere toy of the warrior; it is no longer Aude,

barely mentioned in the *Chanson de Roland,* but Nicolette, that fairest, sweetest of the mediæval heroines of romance, who is of more interest than Aucassin in the story. And this little *chantefable*, as it is aptly called, of *Aucassin et Nicolette*, is so nearly Provençal that Provence has claimed it; it lies on the borderland between the manner of the troubadours and that of the *trouvères*. A woman is here distinctly a heroine, no longer a mere foil to the hero; and the lovely little tale is manifestly intended to please an audience of ladies as well as of knights.

We have spoken of this Provençal influence and sought to illustrate what may be the method of its working, through the minstrel in the lady's bower, but we do not care to lay too much stress upon it, because it may not be entirely distinct from a still greater and kindred influence. When the hosts of Peter the Hermit, crazed with religious fanaticism such as the world sees but once in a great while, straggled back from their crusade it might have been thought that they brought with them nothing but the memory of their sufferings, or the precious memory of those holy places they had journeyed so far and endured so much to see. But their crusade had been a success; they had won the holy places from the infidel, and after they had achieved their success they had had time to look about them upon the new civilization with which they found themselves in contact. When they come back to their homes they bring enthusiastic memories of the glories of the East, and soon the spirit of sheer adventure replaces, almost insensibly, religious feeling, and crusade follows crusade, till we find one that does not even pretend to go to Palestine, but devotes itself to the conquest of Constantinople, full of riches and luxuries undreamed of in France. When Geoffrey Villehardouin gives a glowing description of the magnificence of Constantinople we see

that already there is appreciation of things that the first crusaders would have scorned or ruthlessly destroyed. The influence of the Crusades in introducing higher standards of domestic comfort, greater luxury, greater refinement, has been too often dwelt upon to need further notice here.

The cause of woman and of civilization was helped in another way by the Crusades. While the warlike barons found a vent for their surplus fighting blood in smiting the infidel and robbing the Greek, there was peace at home, for private wars and feuds ceased. The barons, moreover, needed money to continue their sojourn in the army of Christ; and we hear that in the splendor of the preparations for that Crusade in which Eleanor took part the nobles of France vied with each other till they were almost ruined. To get this money they sold freedom to their slaves, immunity from vexatious feudal rights to their serfs, privileges and charters to their burgesses. While they themselves were spending their money and acquiring expensive tastes and refined ideas in contact with the Greeks and Saracens, their subjects were acquiring a greater degree of freedom, and their king, if he were a wise one, was consolidating his kingdom and girding up his loins for more effective resistance to their turbulence. The strength of the monarchy increased as the power of the independent baronage decreased, and the strength of the monarchy meant greater tranquillity, greater respect for law, and the fostering of conditions favorable to the growth of commerce.

Manners were still rough and cruel, for the Crusades had not tamed the ferocity of the European heroes. We hear that, when Saladin refused to pay the enormous ransom demanded for the town of Acre, Richard Cœur de Lion put to death the two thousand six hundred captives

whom he held as hostages, and the Duke of Burgundy did likewise with his captives. But in France there was getting to be less and less opportunity for the display of wanton cruelty toward the lower orders of society. The seigneur still believed in the truth of the old proverb:

> "Oignez vilain, il vous poindra;
> Poignez vilain, il vous oindra."

[Stroke a villain, and he will sting you; sting a villain, and he will stroke you]; but the number of serfs was constantly diminishing. The great communal movement emancipated the bourgeois of the towns; whole villages bought their freedom; the monarchy favored enfranchisement and gave the example in freeing serfs here and there, till, in 1315, all the serfs of the royal domain were set free, and the great doctrine was proclaimed: *Selon le droit de nature, chacun doit naître franc*—"according to the law of nature, everyone should be born free."

The general improvement in conditions affected more visibly the bourgeois class. We find, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that the members of this class are beginning to build large, solid houses of stone, with ogival windows, and sometimes with lofty towers and crenelated battlements. As a class they become richer and obtain recognition. When Philippe Auguste contemplated paving some of the streets of Paris—they had been mere roads of mud—he sent for the rich citizens to ask their assistance. One of these, Richard de Poissi, is said to have contributed eleven thousand marks in silver. Then the guilds of the tradesmen become wealthy and exercise considerable political power. It is in the reign of Saint Louis that the trade guilds of Paris become so numerous that Etienne Boileau compiles a *Livre des métiers*, containing the statutes of the greater number of them.

In the dress of all classes above the abjectly poor there was a tendency toward greater show, vainly repressed during part of the thirteenth century, but continuing to increase even under repression. The standard costume during the whole period of the Crusades was indeed plain, and very similar for men and for women. On their heads ordinary women wore only a sort of coif, or the cowl attached to the long robe or gown, though there were a few ladies of fashion who scandalized the community by wearing tall, pointed bonnets, sometimes cone-shaped, sometimes with two horns, and with a veil hanging from the tip to form a sort of wimple. The chief article in the dress of both sexes was the garment called a *cotte-hardie,* consisting of a long robe reaching to the feet and confined at the waist by a girdle. The sleeves of the *cotte-hardie* were, among sober-minded dames, rather close fitting and plain; fashion had them made absurdly large, flaring at the wrist to many times the dimensions of the upper part, and sometimes so long as not only to cover the whole hand, but to trail upon the ground. Over the *cotte-hardie* was worn the *surcot,* a sort of tunic, shorter than the undergarment, and either without sleeves or with elbow sleeves. On grand occasions a handsome mantle was worn, but the use of this was generally restricted to noble ladies. The shoes were usually simple, lacing higher on the leg than what we now call shoes; sometimes, however, they were made of gaily colored leathers, richly embroidered, or even of cloth of gold, damask, or the like. The days of high heels had not yet come, and women's shoes seem never to have been quite so outrageous as those long pointed shoes worn by the dandies of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

It was at the other end of the costume, the headgear, that women displayed their extravagance. Fearfully and

wonderfully were the headdresses made, judging from the pictures in manuscripts and from the indignation of the satirists. The modest bonnet sprouted horns of alarming shape and proportions. "When ladies come to festivals," says a thirteenth century satirist, "they look at each other's heads, and carry *bosses* like horned beasts; if any one is without horns, she becomes an object of derision." Not content with having betrayed man by her flirtation with Lucifer in Eden, Eve must now wear on her head the very mark of the beast. No text served as the basis for sermons with more frequency or more delight than one attacking the horns of the ladies. One preacher advised his hearers to cry out: *Hurte, bélier!*—"Beware the ram!" when one of these horned monsters approached, and promised ten days' absolution to those who would do so. "By the faith I owe Saint Mathurin," exclaims the monkish satirist, "they make themselves horned with platted hemp or linen, and so counterfeit dumb beasts; they carry great masses of other people's hair on their heads." The author of the *Romance of the Rose* describes with great unction the gorget, or neckcloth, hanging from the horns and twisted two or three times around the neck. These horns, he says, are evidently designed to wound the men. "I know not whether they call those things that sustain their horns gibbets or corbels, . . . but I venture to say Saint Elizabeth did not get to heaven by wearing such things. Moreover, they are a great encumbrance (owing to the hair piled up, etc.), for between the gorget and the temple and horns there is quite enough room for a rat to pass, or the biggest weasel 'twixt here and Arras."

Neither ridicule nor threats of eternal damnation, however, made any impression on the daughters of Eve, and the horns continued to adorn their fair heads. The other

parts of the costume, as we have said, were usually simple. The robe, or *cotte-hardie*, and the *surcot* were generally of plain cloth of solid color; but as wealth increased, the use of expensive materials became more and more common, and silk, cloth of gold, and velvet appeared on various parts of the dress, as well as a profusion of jewels. A short passage from the description of the costume of the queen in Philippe de Beaumanoir's *La Manekine* may serve to show the utmost that imagination could devise in the way of dress, for, of course, the costume of the heroines of romance is always some degrees more elegant than that to which the fair readers are accustomed.

"The queen arose early in the morning, well dressed and richly jewelled. (Her costume) was laced with a thick gold thread, with two big rubies to every finger's breadth: no matter how dark the skies, one could see clearly by the light of these jewels. She clothed her beautiful body in a robe of cloth of gold, with fur sewn all about it. So fine was the cloth of her girdle that I can scarcely describe it. There were upon it many little platines of gold linked together with emeralds beautiful and costly, and one sapphire there was in the clasp, worth full a hundred marks in silver. Upon her breast she wore a brooch of gold set with many precious stones. Over her shoulders and about her neck she had fastened a mantle of cloth of gold,—no man ever saw more beautiful. Her furs were no common, moth-eaten things, but sable, which makes people look beautiful. At her girdle she wore a purse, in all the world there is none more elegant. Upon her head rested a crown whose like was not to be found; for one gazed at it in wonder and admiration of the beautiful stones in it, stones of many virtues: emeralds, sapphires, rubies, jacinths, . . . never was a more beautiful one seen."

Though the number of jewels is probably magnified, the essential features of the costume correspond to what a lady of fashion would have liked to wear in the year 1250. The mantle, being regarded as suitable for full dress occasions, was much ornamented. In the *Roman de la Violette* (about 1225) we find this description of a lady's mantle: "She wore a mantle greener than the leaves and trimmed with ermine. Upon it were embroidered little golden flowerets, cunningly worked; each one had attached to it, so hidden as to be invisible, a little bell. When the wind blew against the mantle, sweetly sounded the bells. I give you my word that nor harp nor rote nor vielle ever gave forth so sweet a sound as these silver chimes."

Not all ladies, of course, were so gorgeously attired, and even among the noble ladies of the land the delicacy of manners did not always match the elegance of the attire. To get some idea of what a fine lady did, we may look at some of the things she is warned against doing in a sort of book on deportment, of the thirteenth century, —Robert de Blois's *Chastiement des dames*.

> "Cest livre petit priseront
> dames, s'amendees n'en sont;
> por ce vueil je cortoisement
> enseignier les dames comment
> eles se doivent contenir,
> en lor aler, en lor venir,
> en lor tesir, en lor parler."

[Ladies will think but little of this book if they are not improved by it; therefore will I politely teach the ladies how they should conduct themselves, in their goings, in their comings, in silence, and when talking.] This last item, he remarks, requires much care. "Do not talk too much," he continues, "especially do not boast of your love affairs; and do not be too free in your conduct with men when

playing games, lest they be encouraged to take liberties with you. When you go to church, take good care not to trot or run, but walk straight, and do not go too far in advance of the company you are with. Do not let your glances rove here and there, but look straight ahead of you; and salute courteously everyone you meet, for courtesy costs little. Let no man put his hand upon your breast, or touch you at all, or kiss you; for such familiarities are dangerous and unbecoming, save with the one man whom you love. Of this lover, too, you must not talk too much, nor must you glance often at men, or accept presents from them. Beware of exposing your body out of vanity, and do not undress in the presence of men. You must not dispute and get in the habit of scolding, nor must you swear. Above all, eschew eating greedily at the table, and getting drunk, for this latter practice is fraught with danger to you. Unless your face is ugly or deformed, do not cover it in the presence of gentlemen, who like to look at the beautiful." One can guess that this rule was rigidly obeyed; those succeeding touch upon matters still more delicate. "If your breath is bad, take care not to breathe in people's faces, and eat aniseed, fennel, and cummin for breakfast. Keep your hands clean, cut your nails so that they be not permitted to grow beyond the tip of the finger and harbor dirt. It is not polite to gaze into a house when you are passing, for people may do many things in their houses that they would not have seen; it would be well, therefore, when you go into another person's house, to pause a moment on the sill and cough or speak loud, so that they may know you are coming."

Before we give Robert de Blois's directions for table manners it may be well to say a few words about the table. Among the common people the table itself was

little more than a rude board on trestles, with benches or stools along the side and with places scooped out to hold the portion of food allotted to each person. Among the more well-to-do classes, however, the table was a more ornamental piece of furniture. The benches or stools still remained, but the rest was more civilized. The food, consisting of vegetables, roast fowls, boiled meats, and fish was served in large earthenware platters. There were no forks, but spoons and fingers were freely used as well as knives, each guest frequently using his own knife or dagger. As the guests had to help themselves, often with their fingers, out of the common serving platters, there was some reason in the ceremony which preceded each meal; this was the washing of hands, for which the trumpeter sounded a call. Every gentleman had the right to *faire corner l'eau*, as it was called, that is, to have his trumpeter sound the call for washing hands. When this call sounded the pages of the establishment bore the ewer to the ladies, and servants of less pretension did likewise for the gentlemen. Napkins were provided for drying one's hands after this, but the time had not yet come when there were regular table napkins; instead, each wiped his hands or mouth upon the tablecloth, and his knife upon a piece of bread. The company sat at the table in couples, a gentleman and a lady together. This means more than may be apparent at first sight, for one must remember that there was usually but one drinking cup for each couple and that they ate from a common plate. The plate, as we ventured to call it, was regularly a large piece of bread, flat and round, which served to hold the food and absorb the gravy. At the end of the meal this bread, called *pain tranchoir*, was given to the poor, with the other scraps from the table. It took a careful hostess properly to pair off the couples, for it must

LADIES HUNTING

After the painting by Henri Gènois

Sometimes brawls followed the too free use of wine, as one romance tells us "you might see them throw at each other cheeses, and big quartern-loaves, and hunks of meat, and sharp steel knives." But sometimes the ladies strolled off into the gardens and played games—blindman's-buff, or frog-in-the-middle, or the like—or sang to the harp, or sewed. A great deal of time, indeed, was spent out of doors, not only in the gentler field sports, such as hawking, in which ladies participated, but also in the mere routine of daily life. In the romances many a scene of revelry as well as of love making takes place under the trees; and the ladies are not always idling away their time, either; for we find them spinning, embroidering, or at least making garlands of flowers.

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have been very embarrassing for either lady or gentleman to have to *manger à la même écuelle* (eat out of the same porringer) and drink out of the same cup with one personally distasteful. In the romance of *Perceforest* we find the description of a banquet where there were eight hundred knights, "and there was not a one who did not have lady or maiden to eat from his porringer." There was great profusion if not great delicacy upon the table; we shall content ourselves with echoing what Philippe de Beaumanoir says: "If I undertook to describe the dishes they had I should stop here forever. . . . Each had as much as he wished and whatever he wished: meats, fowls, venison, or fish cooked in many styles."

Upon a table so appointed and served we can understand that some of the cautions of Robert de Blois to the ladies would be most useful. "In eating you must avoid much laughing or talking. If you eat with another (out of the same *écuelle*), turn the nicest bits to him, and do not pick out the finest and largest for yourself, which is not good manners. Moreover, no one should try to devour a choice bit which is too large or too hot, for fear of choking or burning herself. . . . Each time you drink, wipe your mouth well, that no grease may go into the wine, which is very unpleasant to the person who drinks after you. But when you wipe your mouth after drinking, do not wipe your eyes or nose with the tablecloth, and take care not to get your hands too greasy or let your mouth spill too much." The really well-bred lady, then, must be like Chaucer's Prioress:

> "At mete was she wel ytaughte withalle;
> She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,
> Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.
> Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
> Thatte no drope ne fell upon hire brest.
> In curtesie was sette ful moche hire lest.

Hire over lippe wiped she so clene,
That in hire cuppe was no ferthing sene
Of grese, when she dronken hadde hire draught.
Ful semely after hire mete she raught."

One might almost fancy that old Dan Chaucer, the first humorist of modern times, was copying from and slyly poking fun at our friend Robert de Blois and his fine lady.

"Quant mengie eurent, si laverent.
Li menestrel dont en alerent
Cascuns a son mestier servir."

[When they had eaten, they washed their hands; then the minstrels began, each doing that which he could do best.] The tables cleared, the guests, the ladies not excepted, watched the tricks of the jugglers and tumblers, listened to the minstrels, or told tales, nearly all of which were horribly coarse. Sometimes brawls followed the too free use of wine, as one romance tells us "you might see them throw at each other cheeses, and big quartern-loaves, and hunks of meat, and sharp steel knives." But sometimes the ladies strolled off into the gardens and played games—blindman's-buff, or frog-in-the-middle, or the like—or sang to the harp, or sewed. A great deal of time, indeed, was spent out of doors, not only in the gentler field sports, such as hawking, in which ladies participated, but also in the mere routine of daily life. In the romances many a scene of revelry as well as of love making takes place under the trees; and the ladies are not always idling away their time, either; for we find them spinning, embroidering, or at least making garlands of flowers. We have a pretty picture in the *Roman de la Violette* of a burgher's daughter "who sat in her father's chamber, working a stole and amice in silk, with care and skill, and embroidering upon her work many a little cross and star, singing the while this spinning song (*chanson à toile*)."

With all this romance and poetry there went a freedom of intercourse between the sexes that not infrequently led to serious immorality. Not only did the ladies play rather rough games and listen to very vulgar stories with the men, but they received visits from men in their bed-chambers, *tête-à-tête*. More surprising still, ladies sometimes visited men in this way, without its being considered a serious breach of etiquette, as one can see in the fashionable romance of *Jean de Dammartin et Blonde d'Oxford*. The ladies, when they really fell in love, did not attempt to conceal the passion from any feeling of shame or delicacy; nay, they were commonly very forward, and became ardent suitors sometimes, with less of restraint in word and deed than was shown by the chivalrous knight under similar circumstances. Indeed, the knight had need to be a veritable Joseph to withstand temptation, if there were many scenes in real life like that described, for example, in the romance of *Amis et Amiles*, where the good knight is pursued by a demoiselle who positively insists on loving him.

The hours of the lady's day were regulated, we may suppose, by the proverb which says:

> "Lever à cinq, diner à neuf,
> Souper à cinq, coucher à neuf,
> Fait vivre d'ans nonante et neuf."

[Rising at five, dining at nine, supping at five, sleeping at nine, makes one live to ninety-and-nine.] Sometimes, instead of rising at five and dining at nine, it is rising at six and dining at ten, supping at six and to bed by ten; but we are not, in this case, promised the ninety-and-nine years of life. Dinner between nine and ten, and other meals at suitable hours, seems to have been the rule in France even until the sixteenth century. Breakfast was a very

uncertain meal (think of breakfast before a nine o'clock dinner!), but supper was almost as elaborate as dinner. As candles and lamps were very expensive, being regarded as almost a luxury, there was some reason in the early hours for meals. For the same reason, in summer, when there were no fires to supply light, most people went to bed as soon as it grew dark. The lady of the house is told, in a French housekeeper's book of the fourteenth century, to see that the candles are not wasted. She must go around to see that all fires are out and the house properly closed and that the servants are in bed. These latter are to place the candle allowed them on the floor, at a safe distance from the bed, and the lady must take care "to teach them to put out their candle with the mouth, or with the hand before getting in bed, and not by throwing their chemises over it"—servants, mistress, and all, be it remembered, slept naked.

The kind of life we have been describing, the washing of hands, the plentiful food, the wine, the amusements, the rich costumes—all these are things belonging to the lady. The woman of the poorer classes, the laboring woman, had no such comforts; lucky was she, indeed, if she had enough of coarse food and coarse clothing for herself and children. The mediæval moralists noted the inequality of the classes, and one of them compares the fare of the rich, which we have mentioned, with that of the poor: "There was not one among them, great or small, who did not have a fine appetite for dry [black] bread, and garlic, and salt; nor did they eat anything else with these, neither mutton, nor beef, nor a bit of goose or young spring chicken. And after the meal they took up the basin with both hands, and drank water." Having attempted to give some idea of the life of a lady of the time, we may now turn to the life of Blanche de Castille, the first lady of France in the second

quarter of the thirteenth century. For the first time we shall find a woman whose history will include a large part of the history of France during her period. As a late biographer, Elie Berger, *Histoire de Blanche de Castille,* says: "Her life, during a great part of the thirteenth century, is the life of France itself, the France to which she gave peace; her history is the history of the power of the throne, of the monarchy, outside of which there was then no France, no *patrie.*"

Chapter V

Blanche de Castille as Regent of France

V

BLANCHE DE CASTILLE AS REGENT OF FRANCE

IN a preceding chapter we saw how old Queen Eleanor was despatched into Spain to bring her granddaughter, Blanche de Castille, as a bride for Louis of France, and how Eleanor fell ill on the way, and handed over her charge to Elie de Malmort, Archbishop of Bordeaux. The child whom Eleanor was bringing back as a sacrifice to peace between John and Philippe Auguste was then but a little over twelve years of age. Blanche was born in the early part of the year 1188, at Palencia. Her father, a good man and a brave warrior, was Alphonso VIII., surnamed the Noble, King of Castille; and her mother was Eleanor of England, daughter of Henry II. and Eleanor of Guienne. Fortunately, this latter lady seems to have inherited none of the bad traits of her mother and namesake; at least contemporary accounts call her "chaste, noble, and of good counsel." The family of the young Princess Blanche was large and of illustrious connections. We need not note those of the direct Plantagenet line, which are sufficiently familiar, but on her father's side we may mention her eldest sister, Bérengère, who, married to her cousin, the King of Leon, had been forced to separate from him in spite of their love, in spite of their children, in spite of important reasons of state. Queen Bérengère was of a character, it appears, very much like that of her sister,

and there was much love between the two. Another sister, but a year older than Blanche, married Alphonso of Portugal, whose brother was that Count Ferrand de Flandre defeated at Bouvines by Philippe Auguste and kept in captivity for many years. Of this sister a curious story is told.

It appears that, in the negotiations between John and Philippe Auguste, the name of the Princess of Castille who should become the wife of Prince Louis had not been specified. The King of Castille had two unmarried daughters, Urraque and Blanche. When the ambassadors of France came, accompanied by Queen Eleanor, the two princesses were brought before them. They chose Urraque, as the elder and the more beautiful; but when they heard her name they protested that would never do, it was too hard for the people of France to learn to pronounce; and so the choice fell upon Blanche.

After being conducted to Normandy, where was the court of her uncle, John, the little princess was married immediately. The treaty for whose ratification and observance she was a sort of pledge was signed on May 22, 1200. John ceded nearly all that Philippe could ask, and bestowed twenty thousand marks sterling upon the young husband. The next day the ceremony was performed at Portmort, on the right bank of the Seine, by the Archbishop of Bordeaux, in the presence of a great assemblage of barons and ecclesiastics. The young prince and his bride could not be married on French soil by reason of the interdict then in force against his father for repudiating Ingeburge; hence the choice of Norman soil and of such an out of the way place. The prince, aged only twelve years and six months, proceeded with Blanche direct to Paris. There is no record of the usual festivities accompanying a royal marriage, despite the accounts of some

modern historians, who claim that there were grand tourneys, and that Louis was wounded in one of them.

In one so young as Blanche it is useless to look for the traits of the grown woman; we might conjecture much, but it would be in the light of after events. To those about her at this time Blanche seemed a beautiful girl, deserving of the flattering play upon words which her name suggested. She was *la princesse candide* not only in looks but in conduct, and won the devoted love of her boy husband, who seems to have been himself of a lovable disposition. It was at his request that Hugh of Lincoln, at that time in great repute, visited Blanche, whom he found in tears and managed to console. But the times were troublous, and we may well suppose that there was little chance for the fostering of quiet domestic virtues when one had been forced to marry merely for reasons of state. It is rumored, though not positively confirmed, that the crafty King of France made use of his young daughter-in-law to solicit from King John another slice of Normandy, which John dared not refuse. Whether this be true or not, it is at least certain that neither immediately nor ultimately did the marriage of Blanche de Castille help the English Plantagenets. For John quarrelled with Alphonso, Blanche's father, and the two were at war with intervals of truce, between 1204 and 1208, the subject of dispute being Gascony. Blanche naturally sided with her father rather than with her uncle, and when she bore heirs who might inherit the crown of France, made stronger by the accession of the Norman lands which had been taken from John and given to her husband, it is easy to see that her sympathies would be with her adopted country.

Blanche's first child—a daughter, who lived but a short time, and whose name is not known—was born in 1205.

On September 9, 1209, she gave birth to a son, hailed as the heir to the crown, and named Philippe, in honor of his grandfather. But this child, too, lived only a few years, dying when between eight and nine. In the interval, on January 26, 1213, Blanche had borne twins, Alphonse and Jean, who did not live long. Other domestic joys and sorrows were coming to the young princess. Her father won a great victory over the Moors, at Las Navas de Tolosa, July 16, 1212, and her sister Bérengère wrote her the glad news: "It is my pleasure to inform you of joyful news; thanks be to God, from whom all good comes, our king, our lord, our father has vanquished on the field of battle the Emir Almounmenim, by which, I think, he has won very great honor; for until this time it has never happened that a king of Morocco has been defeated in a pitched battle." Within two years after this the gallant Alphonso was dead, and one month later his wife Eleanor followed him to the tomb.

Father and mother had thus both been taken from Blanche, while she was far from them, in a strange land. But her new country was winning a hold upon her heart; in the war then waging between her Uncle John and her father-in-law, all her interests and all her affection were on the side of France. And now another son was born, on Saint Mark's day, April 25, 1215, at the royal residence of Poissy. The child was named Louis, and his birth seems to have created but little interest, as was natural, since the older brother, Philippe, was still living. But this child became the famous Saint Louis, and pious legends must needs gather around his birth and his infancy: it was at the special intervention of Saint Dominique, whose prayers Blanche had asked, that this son was born; then, at the time of his birth, the pious queen learned that, out of consideration for her, the bells of the

church of Poissy had been silenced, so she had herself removed, though then in childbed. The piety of Blanche was sincere but never exaggerated; it is easy to see in such a legend the art of those who thought it fitting that a saint, even before birth, should allow nothing to interfere with the services of the church. In like manner Blanche's extreme jealousy in regard to her baby is a fiction that has been often repeated. Louis was given to a nurse, Marie la Picarde, and there is no truth in the story which represents Blanche as snatching him from the breast of one of her ladies and forcing the infant to disgorge the milk of the stranger.

The little Louis was not two years old when the English barons, in revolt against John, called his father to their aid and promised him the throne of England, to which he had no claim except through Blanche. Louis went to England, in spite of the anathemas of the Pope against all who dared oppose John. Successful at first against the English king, the French prince began to suffer serious reverses when the hated John was succeeded by his son, Henry, against whom the English barons had no just cause of complaint. Philippe Auguste had been from the beginning too politic to lend his son open assistance, or even to sanction his enterprise. The task of collecting and sending him reinforcements devolved upon Blanche. For the first time the full energy of her character is displayed. A chronicler, almost contemporary, records an alleged interview between her and Philippe Auguste, who, deaf to his son's entreaties for help, had declared that he would do nothing, and that he did not care to risk excommunication. "When Madame Blanche (it is by this title that she is referred to even when queen) heard of this she came to the king and said: 'Would you let my lord, your son, perish thus in a strange land? Sire, for God's sake,

remember that he is to reign after you; send him what he needs, at least the revenues of his own patrimony.' 'Certes,' said the king, 'I will do nothing, Blanche.' 'Nothing, sire?' 'No, truly.' 'In God's name, then,' replied Blanche, 'I know what I will do.' 'And what will you do?' 'By the holy Mother of God, I have beautiful children by my husband; I will put them in pledge, and well I know some who will lend me on their security.' Then she rushed madly from the king's presence; and he, when he saw her go, believed that she had spoken but the truth. He had her called back, and said to her: 'Blanche, I will give you of my treasure as much as you would have; do whatever you wish with it; but rest assured that I myself will send him nothing.' 'Sire,' said Madame Blanche, 'you say well.' And then the great treasure was given to her, and she sent it to her lord."

The details of this conversation may not be absolutely accurate, but the facts seem to have been correctly recorded. Blanche went to Calais and there established headquarters for collecting provisions, munitions, and a small army for her husband. She despatched an expedition to his aid, the army being under command of Robert de Courtenay, the fleet under that of the famous pirate and freebooter Eustache le Moine. But the fleet was destroyed by the English off Sandwich, August 24, 1217, and there was no other course open to Louis than to make the best terms he could with Henry III. and return to France. Blanche had displayed an energy that elicited the admiration of her contemporaries, but for the next few years she had no part in the larger events of history.

Domestic duties, domestic sorrows, indeed, must have absorbed a good deal of the energy of this devoted wife and mother. In September, 1216, her son Robert had been born. In 1218 she lost Philippe, her oldest son. Three

other children came in rapid succession: John (1219); Alphonse (1220); Philippe Dagobert (1222). Of these only Alphonse was destined to live to manhood. The anxious mother, having lost so many of her children, would make vows for their recovery when any of them fell ill. Fearing that she might have forgotten to fulfil some of these vows, often made under stress of anguish, she sought and obtained from the Pope (1220) permission to perform charities in place of trying to fulfil her vows in all cases.

In her native land, too, there were events to claim her attention. Her brother, Henry, having been accidentally killed after a short reign, Queen Bérengère was the next heiress; but she refused the crown for herself, placing it upon the head of her son, Ferdinand III., whom she continued to counsel and assist very much as Blanche was later to counsel her son. It is reported that the discontented subjects of Ferdinand offered the crown to Blanche. Whether this be true or not, she would never have taken sides against her sister Bérengère.

On July 14, 1223, the great King Philippe Auguste died, and on August 6th Queen Blanche and King Louis VIII. were crowned with solemn ceremonial. The Abbot of Saint-Remi, escorted by two hundred knights, brought the sacred ampulla to the cathedral of Rheims, and the archbishop anointed the royal pair. The king's sword was borne in the procession by his half-brother, Philippe Hurepel, son of Agnès de Méranie and Philippe Auguste. There were great festivities, lasting eight days, and the new king and queen manumitted serfs and showed mercy upon prisoners and captives. Queen Blanche still remains in the background during the brief reign of Louis VIII.; but we may note that she used her influence to secure the liberation of Ferrand de Portugal, Count of Flanders, who

had been in captivity since the battle of Bouvines. Released from prison in 1227, Ferrand lived to become one of Blanche's most steadfast and useful allies.

Louis VIII. died in November, 1226, leaving Blanche with eight children to care for; in addition to those already mentioned there were Isabelle, Etienne, and Charles, all born since the accession of Louis. The king, who had forced the submission of Languedoc during the expedition on which he died, made his barons swear to be true to his son Louis. Realizing that his devoted wife could not reach him before his death, he provided as best he could for her. With perfect confidence in her, a confidence fully justified by the event, he declared that Prince Louis, his heir, as well as the whole kingdom and all the rest of his children should be under the tutelage of Queen Blanche until they came of age; to this important portion of the king's will some of the great barons and high church dignitaries were witnesses.

Blanche and her husband had loved each other tenderly and faithfully, and at first the widowed queen was looked upon with compassion. She was on her way to Louis's bedside, the younger children in a carriage and Prince Louis riding ahead, when she was met by the news of his death. Her grief was pitiable; but her sense of duty toward her children and her realization of the difficulties and dangers of her position gave her courage. She was not the kind of woman to succumb under grief for the loss of a well-loved husband or anxiety at finding herself obliged to govern a kingdom whose king was yet a boy.

At first the old retainers of Louis were around her and faithful to her. She was politic enough to win the support of the only prince of the blood, Philippe, surnamed Hurepel, on account of the great mat of shaggy hair he had inherited from his father, Philippe Auguste. Ferrand,

Count of Flanders, was her friend, and she could rely upon the support of most of the clergy, and especially upon that of the papal legate, Romain Frangipani, Cardinal of Saint Angelo. Her surest allies, however, were the immediate servants of the crown: the chancellor, Guérin, who was unfortunately not to live long; Archambaud de Bourbon, Count Amaury de Montfort, the chamberlain, Barthélemy de Roye, and the noble constable, Mathieu de Montmorency. With the aid of such friends, Blanche began her duties as regent.

How long this regency was to last, how long it really did last, are matters not altogether easy to determine. In the first place, there were precedents, in the royal line as well as in feudal annals, for considering the age of majority as fourteen years; but there seems to have been authority equally as good for holding to the age of twenty-one. Louis was in his twelfth year when his father died. Blanche continued to act as regent for about ten years, and there was no protest based on the pretext that the young king should have been considered a major at fourteen years.

As soon as possible, Blanche had Louis crowned, a ceremony which did not imply that he was to be considered out of her tutelage, but which did give him a certain amount of prestige and consequent protection. The coronation, which took place on November 29, 1226, at Rheims, was but poorly attended by the nobles. Already there was discontent, and the great house of Dreux, led by the crafty and unscrupulous Pierre Mauclerc, Count of Brittany, was at the head of the disaffected. Count Thibaud de Champagne, son of Blanche's first cousin, would have come to the coronation, but Blanche ordered the gates of Rheims closed against him; for it was currently rumored, though the rumor was entirely without justification, that Louis VIII. had died very suddenly because of poison administered by

Thibaud. But, with or without the presence of the great barons, Louis IX. was crowned, and Blanche made for herself and her son such friends as she could.

In England Henry III., always restive under the thought of the losses sustained by his father in France, was continually scheming to regain the lost territories. He formed alliances with some of the chief lords of Poitou, entered into negotiations for the hand of Yolande, daughter of Pierre Mauclerc, and made abortive, but nevertheless startling, preparations for a descent upon the coast of France. His allies among the discontented French nobility took up arms, inspired in part by the jealous Isabelle d'Angoulême, who had been the queen of John Lackland and was now Countess of Marche. Blanche promptly summoned the *ban royal* to assemble at Tours, whither she went with Louis in February, 1227. Count Thibaud de Champagne had been in treaty with the rebels and was marching with his forces as if to join them in Poitou. Tradition says that he was diverted by a secret message from Blanche; at any rate, he suddenly turned in his march and came to Tours, did homage to the boy king, and was graciously received by the queen regent. The defection of Thibaud upset the plans of the rebels, who quarrelled among themselves. Many of them came, one by one, to submit to Louis IX., and hostilities were suspended between the French and Richard of Cornwall, brother and representative of Henry III.

During the truce which followed, Blanche was enabled to prosecute the unfinished war in Languedoc against Raymond VII. of Toulouse and the Albigensian heretics. One is surprised to find that certain churches in France refused at first to grant the king subsidies to conduct this crusade, and that it was only by the vigorous measures of Cardinal Romain that they were at length compelled to yield.

The turbulent barons could not endure being governed by a woman. If Blanche had been a weak ruler the indignity of bearing her rule would have been atoned for by the laxity of that rule; but she was strong, and could control the barons, who accordingly hated her. Pierre Mauclerc and his party declared that France was not meant to be ruled by a foreign woman; they called her "Dame Hersent," like the she-wolf in the *Roman du Renart;* they circulated odious calumnies against her. The most noteworthy of these calumnies is that which connected her name with that of Thibaud de Champagne as an adulteress. They said that Blanche had been his paramour even during the life of her husband; nay, that she had connived at the murder of her husband, poisoned by Thibaud. They alleged that she was, moreover, secretly sending the royal treasure into Spain; that she was so vile that one lover did not suffice; that she had illicit relations with Cardinal Romain. It is needless to say that there is no foundation for these tales; they are the tax that a good woman paid for being at the same time great.

The malcontents plotted to separate the king from his mother, and determined to carry him off by force. Blanche and Louis were near Orleans when warned of the danger. Hastening toward Paris, they were forced to take refuge in the strong castle of Montlhéry, for the rebels were assembled in force at Corbeil, between them and Paris. Blanche appealed to the citizens of Paris to safeguard the king's approach. There could not have been a better testimonial to the popularity of the royal family and, incidentally, to the good government enjoyed under Blanche than the response made by these *bourgeois.* The militia of the surrounding country having been gathered in Paris, the combined forces of the city and country marched to Montlhéry, deploying along the route. Long after this

Saint Louis used to tell Joinville of his triumphal entry: "He told me," says this chronicler, "that from Montlhéry, the road was filled with men with arms and men without arms, up to the gates of Paris, and that all shouted and called upon the Lord to grant him long and happy life, and to guard and protect him against his enemies." The nobles were balked, and retired from Corbeil.

The barons, though temporarily disheartened, were by no means reduced to peaceful submission. England was still in a threatening attitude; while the long and relentless war against the Albigenses was dragging on, with success now on this side, now on that. Blanche had need to fortify herself as wisely as she could. She sought the support of the bourgeois. The citizens of Limoges and of Saint-Junien in the Limousin, in charters granted in 1228, swore fealty to the queen as well as to the king. Cardinal Romain, at Blanche's instance, came back to France as legate; she found his advice, and the prestige of the papal authority, of material assistance. After some negotiation, the truce with England was renewed for a year, from July, 1228, to July, 1229.

Philippe Hurepel, who had been faithful for a time to the interests of his sister-in-law and her son, displayed discontent, and now went over to the side of the rebels. It is said that he even had an eye on the throne, and that the barons had some notion of trying to set up Enguerrand de Coucy as king—that Coucy who was the head of the house with the famous motto:

> "Je ne suis roi, ne duc, ne prince, ne comte aussi:
> Je suis le sire de Coucy."

Before actual hostilities began, Blanche had required and received new oaths of fealty from the communes of the royal domain north of the Seine, as far as Flanders.

Magistrates of Amiens, Compiègne, Laon, Péronne, and a host of other places, swore to defend the king, Queen Blanche, and her children. The barons had arranged that Pierre Mauclerc should begin hostilities, and that when Blanche summoned the feudal army to march against him each should come, but come with only two knights, which would make a force so small that Mauclerc would have nothing to fear. Once more Thibaud de Champagne came to the rescue. He gathered all the troops he could, and came with over three hundred knights, these being, when joined to the contingents from the loyal communes of the royal domain, enough to save Blanche. In January, 1229, Blanche marched into the domains of the refractory Mauclerc—who had refused to appear when summoned to the court—and laid siege to the strong castle of Bellême. In a few days, though the stronghold was considered impregnable, the garrison was forced to surrender. The actual military operations of this successful siege were conducted, of course, by Blanche's general, Jean Clément, the marshal of France; but she herself looked after the comfort of her army. It was intensely cold; she ordered the soldiers to build great bonfires in the camp, promising pay to those who would fetch fuel from the forests; by this means, men and horses were kept warm.

After the capitulation of the garrison of Bellême, Mauclerc's power was temporarily broken, and Blanche marched back to Paris with Louis, who had accompanied her. The barons had not received the support on which they had counted from Henry III., whose weakness and vacillation kept him from taking advantage of what would have been a splendid opportunity to weaken the power of France.

In her precarious situation Blanche needed the support of all classes; it was now her misfortune to incur, for a

time, the ill will of the students of the University of Paris. These students had, from long custom and by royal favor, been allowed all sorts of privileges and immunities, since the University added no little to the prestige of Paris. They were a turbulent set, frequently engaged in brawls with the citizens. On Shrove Monday, 1229, some students went to an inn at Saint-Marcel, outside Paris, where they ate and drank, and then engaged in a violent quarrel with the innkeeper when the bill was presented. The quarrel at first seemed rather comic; after a wordy battle they came to blows and pulling of hair, till the students were driven ignominiously from the field. But next day, February 27th, they returned in force, armed with sticks and stones, and even swords. In a spirit of undiscriminating revenge, they wrecked the first inn they came across and beat the people in the streets, women as well as men. Word was sent at once to the authorities of the University, who appealed to Queen Blanche through Cardinal Romain. The prefect of Paris, with his soldiers, was ordered to proceed to the scene of the rioting and restore order, which he did with rather too good a will, for in the process there was bloodshed; several students were killed, and the complaint was made that those whom the prefect and his men attacked were not the guilty ones. The authorities of the University were up in arms against the queen. As she declined to make the reparation they demanded—which would have left the students more lawless than ever for the future—teachers and students scattered, to Rheims, to Angers, to Orleans, and many returned to their native land. The concessions which Blanche then made could not bring back all who had gone away. Though her policy may have been mistakenly severe one can but grant that she had cause for being severe. All our sympathies are with the woman

whom the students did not hesitate to vilify, reviving the calumny about the relations of Blanche and Cardinal Romain, who had given her able support in this affair. Such currency did this vile story gain that one chronicler tells us that the queen submitted to an examination to disprove it.

The first real victory for France in the long war of the Albigenses came with the treaty of Paris, sometimes called the treaty of Meaux, April 12, 1229. It is, perhaps, fortunate for the reader's good opinion of Blanche that we omit to chronicle the horrors of this war, though most of those horrors were committed before she became ruler of France. Raymond VII., Count of Toulouse, the head and front of the resistance in Provence, was Blanche's cousin, and she had always shown herself mindful of family ties, so that we may charitably suppose that she did the best she could for the ruined Raymond. We do not know that she assisted at his humiliation,—barefooted, and in his shirt, he was led to the door of Notre Dame and made to swear absolute submission to the Church—but we cannot go wrong in assuming that some of the wise provisions of the treaty of Paris were of her suggesting. The provisions were very wise indeed, securing to the French crown almost everything that could be hoped; in our wildest moments of enthusiasm, however, we could not accuse Blanche of having tempered policy with mercy. As a summary of the situation, we may state that Raymond contracted to surrender to Louis Beaucaire, Nîmes, Carcassonne, and Béziers, with other territories on the Mediterranean to the west of the Rhone; that Toulouse and its territory must revert to his daughter Jeanne, who was to be espoused by one of the brothers of Louis IX.; that the dominions remaining to him should also revert to Jeanne, in failure of other heirs of his body.

Failing heirs of Jeanne, the domains acquired as her dower were to revert to the crown of France. More complete ruin for Raymond could hardly have been compassed. It was the end of Provence both as a political and an artistic entity.

We have alluded several times to the famous Thibaud IV., called *Le Chansonnier*, Count of Champagne. His relations with Blanche of Castille are matter both of history and of legend; it behooves us to try to sift the one from the other and to present some account of the loves of Blanche and Thibaud.

Thibaud's mother, Blanche de Navarre, Countess of Champagne, had to play a rôle not unlike that of her cousin Blanche de Castille; she acted as regent in the name of her son, and it was due to her good management that he was allowed to inherit his patrimony. This was surely an age of woman, with Bérengère ruling in Castille, Queen Blanche in France, and another Blanche, of the same family, in Champagne. Thibaud was of a gallant temperament, priding himself upon his knightly accomplishments, but not less upon his talent as a poet; for he was one of those imitators of the troubadours whom we might almost class with the troubadours themselves. Of his gifts as a poet we shall not speak here; in the histories of French literature will be found the record of many of his *chansons*. As a man, it is altogether probable that Thibaud did not suffer from an over-scrupulous conscience; we have knowledge of his acting in very bad faith on several occasions. But these manifestations of bad faith were almost always to the advantage of Blanche de Castille. The rebel barons would enter into league with Thibaud, and he would agree to betray his queen, and would even consider seriously the question of marrying the daughter and heiress of Pierre Mauclerc. At the critical moment comes a missive, nominally from the boy king:

"Sir Thibaud de Champagne, I have heard that you have promised to take to wife the daughter of the Count Pierre de Bretagne; I bid you, by all that you hold most dear in this kingdom, that you do not so. The reason, you know full well; . . . for never have I had one who wished me more ill than this same count." The impulsive Thibaud reads the note, and he and his knights turn aside to support the fair lady who was the real author of the missive. It was this sort of thing which made the barons hate and distrust Thibaud and which gave some color to the reports they industriously circulated, alleging that Blanche was the mistress of Thibaud. The latter had already been accused of poisoning Louis VIII.; it was now added that this crime had been connived at by his paramour, Blanche.

That Thibaud really loved Blanche, there can be no reasonable doubt. His amorous songs were probably inspired in part by this devotion to one whom he might well admire and love,—the fair, and good, and great Queen Blanche, whom he could proudly claim as a cousin. In one of his songs he alludes to her, it seems to us, very distinctly:

"Trop estes trouble, et s'aveis si cler nom."

[Troubled was your life, and yet your name so clear.] The chronicles of the time abound in allusions to Thibaud's passion. It is said that, on one occasion, after a momentary revolt, he came to make his submission, and was severely reproached by the queen for his ingratitude. "Then the Count looked upon the Queen, who was so good and so beautiful, till her great beauty overcame him, and he stood all abashed. Then he answered her: 'By my faith, Madame, my heart and my body and all my lands are yours; there is naught that could please you

that I would not do willingly; and never again, please God, will I go against you or yours.' And he departed all pensive, and often into his thoughts would come the memory of the sweet look, of the lovely countenance, of the queen. Then his heart was filled with sweet and loving thought. But when he remembered that she was so great a lady, and so good and pure that he could never win her love, his sweet thought of love turned into great sadness. And seeing that deep thought engenders melancholy, he was counselled by some wise men to take lessons in *biaus sons de viele et en douz chanz delitables* [in sweet violin music and in soft and pleasing songs]. And so he and Gace Bruslé made between them the most beautiful, the most delightful, the most melodious songs ever heard, either in songs or in violin music. And he had them put in writing in the hall of his château at Provins and in that of Troyes; and they are called the songs of the King of Navarre."

The chronicler who tells us this assigns the incident to the year 1236, when Blanche would have been forty-eight years of age. The date is obviously wrong, or rather the story of many years has been crowded into one. Thibaud's love for Blanche must have begun when she was young and really beautiful; one can hardly imagine a burning passion conceived for a lady of middle age, the mother of twelve children. His devotion, then, dates from an earlier period; indeed, we find definite record of it in the calumnies circulated by the barons before 1230; and one chronicler tells us that, during the war of that year, when the barons were ravaging Champagne, Count Thibaud, dressed as a common stroller and accompanied by one companion as miserably attired as himself, went through the country to find out what his people were saying about him. Everywhere he heard but ill of himself.

"Then said the Count to his *ribaud* (vagabond companion), 'Friend, I see full well that a penn'orth of bread would feed all my friends. I have none, indeed, I verily believe, not a one whom I can trust, save the Queen of France.' She was indeed his loyal friend, and well did she show that she did not hate him. By her the war was brought to an end, and all the land (Champagne) reconquered. Many tales do they tell of them, as of Iseut and Tristan."

The love of Thibaud was not to be doubted, but it is a delicate matter to determine how far his sentiments were reciprocated by Blanche. On the one hand, the party of the barons openly and violently accused her of adultery; on the other hand, we know that no evil woman could have reared Saint Louis and have been beloved and revered by him. If Blanche was a good and pure woman, as we firmly believe, we shall again have to disappoint the lovers of romance, for there must be some explanation other than the purely erotic for her conduct toward Thibaud de Champagne. Alas for the romance! the common-sense explanation is not far to seek, and not difficult of acceptance when we remember the whole career of this remarkable woman. Blanche de Castille was an astute politician; otherwise she would never have been able to maintain her position, with everything against her: the fact that she was a woman, the fact that she was a foreigner, alone comprise many difficulties. We do not know of a single instance in which she allowed her feelings—love, hate, family affection, mere feminine weakness—to sway her or interfere with the settled policy which she had determined upon for the good of her kingdom and of her children. Indeed, as we shall see later, one serious defect in her character was her inflexibility of purpose, her resolute suppression of the tenderer feelings. That she liked and

perhaps admired the brilliant poet-knight who proclaimed his devotion to her in "songs the sweetest ever heard," we need not doubt; but she never responded to his ardent passion. Surrounded by enemies domestic and enemies foreign, she took advantage of the romantic devotion of a poet to win the very effective support of one of the most powerful barons of France. Flattering Thibaud's vanity now and then,—it was no small thing to be reputed the lover of a queen,—she adroitly kept him in leash. As a sovereign, too, she was careful to retain his good will by services of the utmost value, nay, of imperative necessity.

The truce with England was to expire on July 22, 1229. Just at this time, when it might be supposed that the queen's energies would be required in defending or at least in watching the western frontier, threatened by Pierre Mauclerc and his English allies, the Duke of Burgundy and the Count of Nevers prepared to invade Thibaud's country. Marching into Champagne, they devastated the country and reduced Thibaud to a very precarious condition. The pretext of this war was, first, that Thibaud was a traitor and the assassin of Louis VIII.; secondly, that he was a bastard, and that the real ruler of Champagne was Alix, Queen of Cyprus, granddaughter of Thibaud's uncle, Henry II. of Champagne. The claims were both, of course, preposterous, merely trumped up to hide the real motive of the attack, which was aimed at Blanche de Castille and through her at the power of the crown. Alix de Champagne, as the barons called her, was herself of illegitimate descent, a fact recognized by the Church itself.

Like a faithful sovereign, Blanche hastened to the defence of her vassal. Ordering Ferrand de Flandre to create a diversion by an attack upon the county of Boulogne, she summoned her vassals and commanded them to desist from

their attack upon Thibaud. They refused to obey; she forthwith put herself at the head of her army and marched to Troyes. The barons were compelled to accede to a truce.

During this truce Thibaud managed to secure several allies, and the civil war broke out again, even before the nominal expiration of the truce. Villages and towns were burned by the partisans on both sides; Philippe Hurepel, it is said, besought Blanche to be allowed to fight a duel with Thibaud to avenge the alleged murder of Louis VIII. —a sort of appeal to the judgment of God. Wider and wider spread the flames of civil war, till Blanche was almost at the end of her resources, and in real peril. At this juncture a danger from without caused a temporary cessation of hostilities against Thibaud de Champagne.

Pierre Mauclerc, now insolently styling himself Duke—not Count—of Brittany, and adding an English title, Count of Richmond, had written to Louis IX. announcing the withdrawal of his homage. He was to be henceforth a vassal of the crown of England. Henry III. was preparing in earnest for a descent upon France; and Blanche sought allies, or at least friends, among her vassals, while the barons leagued against Thibaud agreed to a truce. Collecting what forces she could, the queen, accompanied by Louis, marched toward Angers against Pierre. Meanwhile, with much pomp and ceremony and rich clothing and luxurious baggage, Henry III. landed at Saint-Malo, on May 3, 1230, where he had an interview with Pierre. Henry was full of splendid plans; fortunately for Blanche, he was incapable of putting them into execution. The time was frittered away in petty encounters, and in debauchery on Henry's part, while Blanche continued to negotiate with any who seemed disposed to favor her cause. She won in this way the support of some Breton and Poitevin nobles, and held together her uncertain feudal

army. As soon as the legal forty days of their service were done, the more discontented of the vassals in her army withdrew, and the king had to follow them in order to prevent their renewing their attacks upon Champagne. Instead of profiting by the embarrassment of his enemies and overwhelming the French, Henry marched to and fro in Brittany, through Poitou and to Bordeaux, returning thence to Brittany. His army was exhausted without fighting; there was much sickness among men and animals; his provisions were giving out. Tired of the fruitless expedition, he sailed back to England, abandoning to the chances of war the Breton nobles who had deserted France under promise of protection from England. Before the joyful news of his departure could reach her, however, Blanche was again in trouble in her attempts to protect Thibaud de Champagne.

A coalition stronger than before had been formed against Thibaud. He had put forth his entire resources in his preparations for defence; but in a pitched battle under the walls of Provins his forces were defeated and routed, and the count himself fled to Paris with the pursuing victors at his heels. All seemed lost, and his enemies were marching about as they pleased over Champagne, when Queen Blanche arrived with her army, which was large enough, fortunately, to intimidate the rebels. She would not talk of terms with armed rebels, but demanded the evacuation of Champagne. After some little parleying, in which the queen held firm, the rebellious barons submitted. Reparation was agreed to on both sides, and the chief of the malcontents, Philippe Hurepel, Count of Boulogne, was satisfied by large indemnities granted him for the damage inflicted by Ferrand de Flandre while he was making war, in defiance of his sovereign, upon the Count of Champagne. Truly, mediæval dispensations are sometimes amazing.

By the end of 1230 the barons were at peace, and Blanche was at liberty to turn her attention to Brittany and Pierre Mauclerc. Louis and his mother marched upon Brittany in the early summer of 1231; but a truce was made with England, and soon after with Pierre Mauclerc, to last until June 24, 1234. The most critical period in Blanche's regency was now passed. Her son, now nearing his majority, was firmly established on his throne; for the great ones of the land had not been able to subdue the spirit of his mother. Their wars had devastated a considerable portion of France, but the common people knew who was to blame for the havoc wrought; they had seen their queen a peacemaker, resorting to arms in defence of loyal and oppressed subjects, but always endeavoring to further the interests of the kingdom by preserving order within rather than by seeking conquests without. She had shown herself a ruler full of energy and resource; the great vassals of the crown, little by little, recognized their inability to destroy her power, and abandoned the attempt.

Two formidable enemies still threatened her, however, in the persons of Henry III. and Pierre Mauclerc. While warlike preparations were going forward, in anticipation of the expiration of the truce, domestic sorrows fell upon Blanche; she lost two of her sons, John and Philippe Dagobert, the first of whom died certainly in 1232, the second perhaps in the same year, perhaps not till 1234. In the midst of great events, those griefs which touch most nearly a woman's heart pass unnoticed by chroniclers.

In order to be prepared for the expiration of the truce, Pierre Mauclerc was seeking to gain such allies as he could. Even in the early part of 1232 he began negotiations with Thibaud de Champagne,—who had lost his second wife, Agnès de Beaujeu, in the year preceding,—in

order to bring about his marriage to Yolande de Bretagne. We have seen how Blanche checkmated this move of her wily adversary. Thibaud married, in September, 1232, Marguerite, the daughter of the loyal Archambaud de Bourbon. In the next year died one who had been a dangerous power in France, Count Philippe Hurepel; his death removed one more of Blanche's difficulties, for he had been restless and pugnacious, when not actually in rebellion. In 1234 Blanche was enabled to do another good turn to Thibaud, who now, by the death of his uncle, had become King of Navarre. The old question of the succession in Champagne and the claims of Alix had never been satisfactorily determined. Blanche now summoned Alix to a conference, where, realizing that her party was no longer in the ascendant, the latter renounced all claim to the counties of Champagne and Blois.

From the south of France, that land of the troubadours, now laid waste in the name of religion, Blanche had nothing to fear in the way of active resistance. Her cousin, Raymond VII. of Toulouse, was completely overcome and was intent only on making his peace with the Church. Prince Alphonse of France was to wed Raymond's daughter, Jeanne, and the restoration of some degree of prosperity in a land which might ere long become a part of France was a matter which Blanche was too wise to neglect. Never forgetting the political interests she had to serve, she did all in her power to protect Raymond from petty annoyance and spoliation, to soothe his feelings, and to get the Pope to return to him the marquisate of Provence, taken away by the treaty of 1229. Meanwhile, the royal power was being more firmly established over the domains ceded to France.

Louis IX. was nearing manhood; it was time to seek a suitable alliance for him. The initiative in this matter

probably came from Blanche, who decided everything for her son, with his unquestioning approval. In 1233, when Louis was nineteen, she consulted with her friends and decided upon the daughter of Raymond Bérenger, Count of Provence, as the most suitable wife for her son. Though the King of France could have commanded a more brilliant alliance, the marriage with Marguerite de Provence was a happy one, and not impolitic, for it assured the friendship of the Provençals, and through the mediation of the queen peace was reëstablished between the Counts of Provence and Toulouse.

An embassy was despatched to escort the young princess, who, as became a daughter of Provence, came with a numerous suite, in which there were minstrels and musicians. Louis went to meet his bride, accompanied by most of the members of the royal family, and the marriage ceremony was performed at Sens, by the Archbishop, on May 26 or 27, 1234. Adequate preparations consonant with the dignity of the occasion had been made by Blanche, but there was no extravagance, no vain display. We hear of a gold crown made for the young queen; of jewels purchased for her; and of a ring formed of lilies and *marguerites,* with the inscription *Hors cet anel pourrions nous trouver amor?*—"Without this ring, can we find love?" presented to the bride by Louis. A handsome wardrobe was provided for the king, and to the lords and ladies of the court were given furs, handsome robes, many of silk, and other presents. Tents were erected to accommodate the crowd, which was too great to find housing in Sens, and there was a leafy bower, made of green boughs, where the king's throne was set up and where, doubtless, the minstrels played. Then there were distributions of money among the poor, whom Blanche and her son never forgot.

Marguerite was young, lovely, and, what was more important still in one who must be the wife of a saint, had been carefully educated and reared in piety. She was of gentler stuff than Queen Blanche, and so we shall not find her playing any great rôle in history; but she was courageous, and a devoted wife. She won her husband's love, and probably exercised some influence over him; but of her married life and of her treatment by Queen Blanche we shall not speak at present.

War with England was threatening again when, on June 8th, Louis returned to Paris with his bride; for the truce with England could not be renewed. Blanche de Castille had provided against the evil day, and the vindictive cruelty of Pierre Mauclerc had helped on her projects. He punished so severely those of his vassals who had been loyal to France that it became easier for Blanche to detach one here and there as an ally. She did not wait for the expiration of the truce to begin her operations, but summoned her army and marched upon Brittany with overwhelming forces. Pierre, who had had but small aid from Henry III., was compelled to submit, and a truce was agreed to for three months, to terminate on November 15th. The delay had been sought by Pierre in the hope of extracting, by entreaties or threats, more active assistance from the miserable Henry III. Finding his appeals here in vain, Pierre returned to France to submit to Blanche and Louis. It is said that he came into the presence of the king with a halter about his neck, pleaded for mercy, and abandoned to Louis all Brittany. While this is doubtless an exaggeration, we know that he submitted absolutely, in November, 1234, to the will of his sovereign, and promised to serve faithfully the king and his mother. It was not long after this that he went to the Holy Land, leaving the government of Brittany in the hands of his son.

The most bitter, the most crafty, the most dangerous of her enemies having been reduced to subjection, there remained but one task for Blanche to accomplish in order to crown the work she had undertaken for her son. In the course of the year 1235–1236 negotiations were undertaken with England that resulted in a truce for a term of five years. Blanche was about to hand over the more active control of affairs to Louis; it was no bad beginning for him to find his realm at peace within and without, with a prospect of the continuance of these conditions.

Chapter VI

The Mother and the Wife of a Saint

VI

THE MOTHER AND THE WIFE OF A SAINT

AS THE regency of Queen Blanche had begun without formality, so it ceased insensibly. There was no set day upon which she formally relinquished the reins to Louis; and so one can but determine an approximate date. On April 25, 1234, Louis may be considered to have attained his majority. Though we find the name of Blanche figuring in royal acts after this date, it becomes less frequent: her share in the government is growing less, though throughout her life she never ceased to stand by her son and act with or advise him. At the very close of her regency we find her once more the central figure with that unaccountable person Thibaud de Champagne. It must be remembered that he was now King of Navarre, a dignity which brought with it less of real power in France than one might suppose; for the French and the Spanish dominions, Champagne and Navarre, were separated. His elevation to the throne may have momentarily turned the head of the poet-king; at any rate, he began to show dissatisfaction and to demur about fulfilling some of the conditions incident to the settlement of the claims of Alix de Champagne. In defiance of his duty as a vassal he gave his daughter, without the king's consent, to Jean le Roux, son of Pierre Mauclerc. He formed alliances with Mauclerc and with others of the old league; the hostile

intent could not be mistaken. The king mobilized his forces and went to meet those of Thibaud. As the latter had not had time to effect a junction with his Breton allies, the royal forces were overwhelming, and he was compelled to find some way out of his difficulty other than fighting. Remembering that he had assumed the Cross, and was, therefore, under the protection of the Church, he persuaded the Pope to enjoin Louis from attacking him, declaring that his person and his lands were, on account of his crusading vow, under the protection of the Church. Even this intervention might not have saved him from severe punishment at the hands of his incensed sovereign; but when he sent to make submission and to ask mercy, Queen Blanche, to whom he especially appealed, summoned him to her presence and promised to obtain fair terms for him. The terms, indeed, were not hard, nor were the reproaches unduly severe which Blanche is said to have made in her last interview with Thibaud: "In God's name, Count Thibaud, you should not have taken sides against us; you should have called to mind the great goodness of my son, the king, when he came to your aid to protect your county and your lands from all the barons of France, who would have burned everything and reduced it to ashes." Then came the courteous reply of the gallant and contrite Thibaud: "By my faith, madame, my heart and my body and all my lands are yours; there is naught that could please you that I would not do willingly; and never again, please God, will I go against you or yours."

The romance of this scene, almost pathetic, is ruthlessly disturbed by the scene that is said to have followed, yet we must tell of this also. The young Prince Robert, always of a violent temper, took it upon him to insult the vanquished King of Navarre. He had the tails of the

latter's horses cut off—a shameful insult to a knight—and as Thibaud was leaving the palace Robert threw a soft cheese on his head. Thibaud returned to Blanche indignant at the insult offered him despite her safe conduct; and she was preparing to punish the offenders summarily when she discovered that the ringleader was her own son.

During the ten or twelve years that now intervened before Blanche was again to take the regency during Saint Louis's crusade, her rôle in public life is of less importance; there will be a fact in history to note here and there, but most of that which we shall say concerns the woman, the mother, rather than the queen. Though eminently fitted in intellect and temperament for exercising the powers of an active ruler, Blanche never forgot that she was only the king's mother, and that she held the royal power in trust for him. In all her acts—they were really done on her own responsibility—she sought to associate the name of her son, as if she would keep for him the honor. In that speech to Count Thibaud she does not reproach him for ingratitude to her; it is, "you should have called to mind the great goodness of my son, the king." Her whole life was devoted to the service of this son, whom she loved with a love painfully intense, cruelly jealous.

When she was left a widow, there was entrusted to her not merely the ruling of a kingdom but the rearing of a large family of children. To this latter task Blanche devoted herself with as much energy and as much good sense as she displayed in larger affairs. She reared with particular care the son who, though not the eldest, had become the heir to the crown. She tried to make of him a good man. It was certainly not her training or her example that taught him excessive devoutness; for, though a good Christian, she was not a devotee. When he was a

boy she gave him over to the care of masters who were to instruct him in all things. There was physical exercise and recreation as well as study; the young prince was not even exempt from discipline: according to his own testimony, one of his masters "sometimes beat him to teach him discipline." His days were regularly portioned off into periods of work, of play, and of religious devotion; in the midst of his teachers, most of whom were Dominicans, the little prince led a very sober life. He was of a quiet and docile disposition, and received instruction willingly and readily, and became a man of considerable learning. From his youth he manifested a tendency to extreme piety, going daily to church, where he entered into the services with strange fervor; he sang no songs but hymns, and led a pure and temperate life. It is said that a religious fanatic, who had listened to some of the calumnies circulated against the queen, one day came to her and rebuked her bitterly for encouraging her son to live a life of licentiousness, in the society of concubines. She corrected his mistaken impression, and said that if her son, whom she loved better than any creature living, were sick unto death she would not have him made whole by the commission of a mortal sin. Saint Louis never forgot this saying of his mother's, which he was fond of repeating to Joinville, and by which he sought to regulate his conduct.

Another of Blanche's children was of the same disposition as Saint Louis in regard to religion. This was the Princess Isabelle, whom her mother had trained as carefully as Louis. On one occasion, when the family was going on a journey and there was much noise of preparation in the midst of the packing, Isabelle covered herself up in the bedclothes in order to pray undisturbed. One of the servants, occupied in packing, picked up child and bedclothes together, and was about to put her with the

rest of the baggage, when she was discovered. Even as a child she would take no part in games, and as a young girl shunned all the gayeties of the court, devoting herself to study, to reading the Scriptures, and to devotional and charitable works, leading a life of the utmost austerity. It is pleasant to know that this timid, pious little lady was not forced into a distasteful union and passed her days in the pursuits she liked best.

Blanche's devotion to her son Louis was repaid by the greatest deference and affection. Her ascendency over him lasted as long as she lived, and was responsible, no doubt, for much unhappiness to his wife. Blanche's love was full of jealousy; she would brook no rival; she must always be first in the affections of her son. And one cannot deny that the great queen was selfish even to the point of positive cruelty in her treatment of Marguerite de Provence. A mere child when she came to the court of France, Marguerite was made to feel that she was not to be first there, though her position as the wife of Louis gave her a claim to first place. She was not of masculine temperament, like Blanche, and she did not seek even the show of power; but Blanche grudged her even the love of her husband, though we have no evidence that Marguerite ever reproached Saint Louis with excessive filial devotion or sought to detach him from his mother. Many stories have come down to us of how "the young queen" was treated by the one whom all France continued to call "the Queen." From the testimony of those intimate with the habits of the royal family come to us details of espionage, petty malice, and cold-heartedness on the part of Blanche: we could not believe these things if they came from less competent witnesses. They are not to the credit of Blanche, for they show the worst side of her nature. The confessor of Saint Louis says: "The queen

mother displayed great harshness and rudeness towards Queen Marguerite. She would not permit the king to remain alone with his wife. When the king, with the two queens, went in royal progress through France, Queen Blanche commonly separated the king and the queen, and they were never lodged together. It happened once that, at the manor of Pontoise, the king was lodged in a room above the lodging of his wife. He had instructed the ushers in the anteroom that, whenever he was with the queen and Queen Blanche wished to enter his room or the queen's, they should whip the dogs to make them bark; and when the king heard this he hid from his mother." Imagine the King of France, the man whose peculiar piety won for him the name of a saint, dodging about like a guilty urchin to keep his mother from finding him in the company of his wife!

The honest old Sieur de Joinville, who feared not to tell his master when he thought him in the wrong, tells us that on one occasion, when Marguerite was very ill after the birth of a child, Louis came in to see her, fearing she was in danger of death. Blanche came in, and Louis hid himself behind the bed as well as he could, but she detected him. Taking him by the hand, she said: "Come away, for you are doing no good here." She led him out of the room. "When the queen saw that Queen Blanche was separating her from her husband, she cried out with a loud voice: 'Alas! will you let me see my husband neither in life nor in death?' And so saying she fainted away so that they thought she was dead; and the king, who thought so too, ran back to her and brought her out of her swoon." There is nothing in these stories to the credit of Blanche or of her saintly son.

Let us turn from this unpleasant picture to glance at some of the facts in the domestic economy of the royal

household. The expenditures of the court were not great; the household was kept on a scale befitting its rank, but there was no vain display. Besides the queen's children there were always a number of dependents, ladies and gentlemen in waiting, etc., and the expenses for the whole establishment were kept in a common account.

Blanche de Castille loved her native land, which she never saw again after she left it to become the wife of Louis VIII., and she kept up as active relations as possible with her relatives, particularly with Queen Bérengère; but she had too much good sense to flood her court with Spanish dependents and Spanish customs, and, therefore, we do not find a great number of Spaniards occupying important posts in the court. A certain number of her special attendants appear to have been Spaniards; we may note a lady in waiting called Mincia, who is often mentioned in the accounts, and who is granted money and horses for a journey into Spain. Then there are two Spaniards to whom gifts of clothing and the like are made at the time of the coronation of Queen Marguerite. But these and other Spaniards whose names one can pick out belonged to the personal suite of the queen, and had nothing to do with politics. There was nothing like the incursion of foreigners which, the people complained, Italianized France in the time of the Medicis.

Among the legitimate expenditures of the court, but rather surprising in the household of a saint, are certain sums set down for the payment of minstrels. Prince Robert of France loved to give presents to minstrels, and when he was knighted, in 1237, more than two hundred and twenty pounds went to the payment of these singers. The horses and their furnishings form no small item in the expenses, since most of the travelling had to be done on horseback, and a numerous retinue of mounted attendants

must be provided. Common pack horses were not costly, but the easy-riding palfrey and the war horse ranged in price from thirty to seventy-five pounds. There were carriages and other vehicles also, though the carriages were few. The state of the roads, indeed, often precluded their use; we find Blanche de Castille excusing herself from going to Saint-Denis because the state of her health forbids her going on horseback: the roads were probably impassable; or, perhaps, it was in attempting this little journey that her carriage suffered the damages recorded in a bill of repairs of 1234, when it seems the unlucky vehicle needed new wheels. There was a carriage for *la jeune reine* Marguerite, too, and a new one was purchased in 1239.

Aside from the money expended in the actual maintenance of her family, Blanche herself spent, and taught Louis to spend, considerable sums in charity. With the miserable economic conditions prevailing in the Middle Ages, poverty must have been far more general and far more distressing than it has ever been since those days. During Blanche's regency the kingdom had been repeatedly ravaged in the course of the wars of the nobles, and there is record of famine, notably in the southwest of the kingdom, where one chronicler asserts that in 1235 he saw a hundred bodies buried in one day in a cemetery at Limoges. On their frequent journeys throughout the country, Blanche and Louis did what could be done to alleviate the condition of the unfortunate, who gathered on the wayside in crowds. There were regular officers to allot the alms properly, and considerable sums were distributed, usually at every stage on the journey. At home, in Paris, there was a regular distribution of money and of bread, with occasional special bounties on the feasts of the Church. One special charity of Queen Blanche's

deserves notice. When a girl was to be married, one of the first questions was, and still is, in France, what dower her parents could give with her; if the dower were insufficient, the poor girl ran a serious risk of not being married at all. Blanche often came to the aid of deserving girls so situated, and her gifts were not confined to her immediate attendants and their families; for example, a poor woman from Anet, a stranger to the court, received one hundred *sous parisis* for the marriage of her daughter; and while on her way back from Angers, Blanche met a young girl of Nogent, to whom she gave fifteen pounds for her marriage.

Blanche had always been respectful in her attitude toward the Church, and pious in her habit of life; but she was never servile in her attitude toward churchmen, whom she would no more allow to interfere with her rule than the greatest of the barons. The higher clergy, as a body, were faithful to her; but, here and there, bishops and archbishops arrogated to themselves powers not theirs, or refused to recognize the rights of the crown, whereupon Blanche did not hesitate to join issue with them. One celebrated case is that of the riots at Beauvais, in 1233, when, under Blanche's direction, Louis restored order and asserted the royal power in spite of the objections of the bishop, and continued to sustain the position taken, even after an interdict had been proclaimed in Beauvais.

During the period between her two regencies, Blanche continued to reside at the court; her jealousy of Marguerite would in part account for her preferring this to retirement to some one of the châteaux belonging to her private estate. At the time, it must be remembered, the queen of Philippe Auguste, Ingeburge, was living in this way at Orléans. Queen Blanche, indeed, enjoyed a considerable revenue from her estates, which she generally intrusted to the care of the Knights Templars, the financial agents

of many a crowned head in Europe. Part of her estates she administered in person. As a further occupation, she devoted herself to various charities. In 1242 the famous abbey of Notre Dame, generally known as Maubuisson, at Pontoise, was completed, thanks to the queen's munificence and to her careful supervision. Maubuisson, with its many dependencies, its beautiful gardens and buildings, became one of the most splendid monastic institutions in France. It was frequently visited and enriched with new gifts by its foundress and her son, and noble ladies chose it as the place to take the veil. One of these ladies, Countess Alix de Macon, became abbess of another convent, Notre Dame du Lys, near Melun, founded by Blanche de Castille.

The management of her estates and the foundation of convents did not, however, monopolize the queen's time and energies; she was always the careful mother, looking out for the interests of her children, and always the queen, ready to act or to decide promptly and firmly in the affairs of the kingdom. She arranged the marriages of her sons, Robert and Alphonse. The former married, in 1237, Mahaut, daughter of the Duke of Brabant, and there were magnificent festivities at Compiègne in honor of the event, the young prince being knighted and made Count of Artois. Alphonse, betrothed to the daughter of Raymond of Toulouse, was married in 1238. The next year Blanche provided a rich and most desirable bride for her nephew, Alphonse de Portugal, who had been reared at the French court. He married the widow of Philippe Hurepel, Mahaut de Boulogne, and was a faithful vassal of France until he became King of Portugal in 1248. For each of these weddings Blanche saw that there was suitable provision in the way of new and elegant clothes and entertainments in keeping with the occasion.

BLANCHE OF CASTILE, MOTHER OF SAINT LOUIS

After the painting by Moreau de Tours

Aside from the money expended in the actual maintenance of her family, Blanche herself spent, and taught Louis to spend, considerable sums in charity. With the miserable economic conditions prevailing in the Middle Ages, poverty must have been far more general and far more distressing than it has ever been since those days. On their frequent journeys throughout the country, Blanche and Louis did what could be done to alleviate the condition of the unfortunate, who gathered on the wayside. At home, in Paris, there was a regular distribution of money and of bread, with occasional special bounties on the feasts of the Church.

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In the larger world, Louis IX. still sought the counsel of his mother: "He sought her presence in his council, whenever he could have it with profit or advantage." In judicial proceedings particularly, we still find her acting in her sovereign capacity; and she continued to keep an eye upon those who had formerly been the rebel barons, her name being associated with that of Louis in various acts concerning the shifty Pierre Mauclerc. For her unfortunate cousin, Raymond of Toulouse, she still exerted her influence with the Pope to obtain some relief from the obligation which he had been forced to assume of spending five years in the Holy Land. It was at his mother's instance, too, that Louis IX. bought from the young Emperor Baldwin of Constantinople those most holy relics, the Crown of Thorns and the large portion of the true Cross, to receive which Louis built the beautiful Sainte-Chapelle. The purchase was really arranged as an excuse for contributing largely to the depleted treasury of the Christian Empire of the East, whose emperor was doubly related to Saint Louis through his father and through Blanche de Castille. The Crown of Thorns, indeed, had been in pawn to Venice. Louis and Blanche went to meet the sacred relic, which was escorted to its resting place in Paris by great crowds singing hymns and displaying every mark of the utmost reverence. For the piece of the Cross, bought three years later, in 1241, the same elaborate ceremonial was observed; and in the great procession which accompanied Saint Louis as he bore the Cross on his shoulders through the streets of Paris walked Blanche and Marguerite, barefooted.

When the Tartar hordes of Ghenghis Khan overran Poland and Hungary, the whole of Christian Europe trembled with fear and horror. If these barbarians could not be checked, and they continued to pour in resistless floods

over the land, what was to become of Christendom? "What shall we do, my son?" cried Blanche; "what will become of us?" "Fear not, mother," replied the brave king; "let us trust in Heaven." And then he added that famous pun which all his biographers repeat: "If these Tartars come upon us, either we shall send them back to Tartarus, whence they came, or they will send us all to Heaven."

Out of this threatening of the Tartars grew a religious persecution, in which Blanche took a part not discreditable to her. When things went wrong in the Middle Ages, it was the fault of the weak and oppressed; if it was not the witches, it was the Jews who had brought misfortune upon the land, and who must be punished before God would be pleased again. In this case it was the Jews, who were accused of lending aid to the Tartars. The popular odium incurred by this accusation encouraged the prosecution of an investigation, ordered by Pope Gregory IX., into the doctrines of the Talmud. France appears to have been the only country where the investigation was actually made. Several Jewish rabbis were haled before the court, presided over by Blanche, to explain and answer for their books. The fairness with which Blanche presided is indeed remarkable when one remembers the severity of the common judicial procedure of the time. The chief rabbi, Yehiel, appealed to her several times against the injustice of being forced to answer certain questions, and she sustained his plea. When Yehiel complained that, whatever the court decided, he and his people could not be protected from the blind rage of the populace, Blanche replied: "Say no more of that. We are resolved to protect you, you and all your goods, and he who dares to persecute you will be held a criminal." When he protested against taking an oath demanded by his persecutors,

because it was against his conscience to swear, Blanche decided: "Since it is painful to him, and since he has never taken an oath, do not insist upon it." She reproved the Christian advocates, the learned doctors of the Church, for the unseemly violence of their language, and sought in every way to maintain some sort of impartiality, or at least of decency, in the trial. If she had conducted the trial to the close, there might have been a different sentence from that which condemned the Talmud and ordered it to be committed to the flames.

It was through an agent of Blanche, apparently a burgess of Rochelle, that Saint Louis obtained most valuable and timely information in regard to the rebellious preparations of Hugues de Lusignan, Comte de la Marche. This Hugues de Lusignan was the vassal of Alphonse, brother of the king. He had always been inclined to revolt, and this inclination was not lessened by the incitement of his wife, the haughty, high-tempered Isabelle d'Angoulême, widow of King John of England. To have started as Queen of England, on an equal footing with her contemporary, Blanche de Castille, to have seen her miserable husband gradually lose his rich possessions in France, and to find herself now merely a countess and compelled to do homage to a son of her rival,—this must have been the very wormwood of bitterness for Isabelle. The secret agent of Queen Blanche writes a very elaborate account of the conduct of Isabelle and Hugues in 1242.

Hearing that Hugues had received King Louis and his brother, Alphonse, in her absence, Isabelle carried off part of her property and established herself in Angoulême. For three days she refused to admit her husband to her presence, and when he did appear she lashed him with her tongue in furious fashion: "You miserable man, did you not see how things went at Poitiers, when I had to dance

attendance for three days upon your King and your Queen? When at last I was admitted to their presence, there sat the King on one side of the royal bed and the Queen on the other. . . . They did not summon me; they did not offer me a seat, and that on purpose to humiliate me before the court. There was I, like a miserable, despised servant, standing up in front of them in the crowd. Neither at my entry nor at my exit did they make any show of rising, in mere contempt of me and of you, too, as you ought to have had sense enough to see." After scenes of this kind in the bosom of his family it is not surprising that the unfortunate Comte de la Marche sought the more peaceful atmosphere of the camp, and engaged in a revolt against his sovereign. Louis, however, had little difficulty in bringing him to reason and obtaining another victory over England, whom the rebels had enlisted on their side. "And it was no marvel," says Joinville, writing of this campaign of Saint Louis's, "for he acted according to the advice of the good mother who was with him."

One of the severest trials in the life of this *bonne mère* was approaching. Louis, always of a delicate constitution, had contracted a fever during the campaign against the Comte de la Marche, and the effects lingered with him until, at the close of 1244, he had a violent recurrence of the attack, accompanied by dysentery. In spite of the tender care of Blanche, his life was despaired of. He lost consciousness and, says Joinville, to whom we shall leave the telling of the story, "was in such extremity that one of the ladies watching by him wished to draw the sheet over his face, and said that he was dead. And another lady, who was on the other side of the bed, would not suffer it, but said that there was still life in him. And as He heard the discussion between these two ladies, Our

Lord had compassion on him, and gave him back his health. And as soon as he could speak he demanded that they give him the Cross; and so it was done. Then the queen, his mother, heard that the power of speech had returned to him, and she showed therefore as great joy as she could. And when she knew that he had taken the Cross, as he himself told her, she showed as great grief as if she had seen him dead."

Blanche's grief was not without cause, for nothing short of the death of this well-beloved son could have caused her the pain that she must endure if he went on the crusade. Not only her age, but the knowledge that he would wish her to stay behind and guard the kingdom for him, precluded all thought of her accompanying him. It meant separation from him on whom she had all her life lavished an affection little short of idolatry. How bitterly must she have regretted encouraging that fervent piety that now led to a sacrifice, in the name of his religion, of all that the king, the son, the husband ought to hold most dear. At a time when, under the persistent efforts of his grandfather, his father, and his mother, the power of the crown had just begun to be firmly established, Louis must reverse all this policy, or rather must make use of it not to the profit of his kingdom but to that of fanatical religious ideals. Blanche was too good a politician not to understand this, and too sensible not to deplore it. Louis's duty lay in France; he had everything to lose, nothing to gain, in a crusade; though Blanche knew too well the relentless doggedness with which he would cling to what he conceived to be his duty to God, nevertheless she pleaded with him to give up the idea of going on the crusade.

The pleading of his mother and of his wife could not turn Saint Louis from his design, nor was the advice of

his councillors more effective. For three years, however, other matters occupied his attention, though the preparations for his holy war were not forgotten. When these preparations began to be undertaken with more vigor a fresh attempt was made to dissuade him. The Bishop of Paris one day said to him: "Do you remember, sire, that when you received the cross, when you made suddenly and without reflection so momentous a vow, you were weak and troubled in spirit, which took from your words the weight of truth and responsibility? Now is come the time to seek release from this obligation. Our lord, the Pope, who knows the needs of your kingdom, would gladly give you a dispensation from your vow." And then he pointed out the peculiar danger of undertaking such an enterprise in the existing disturbed state of Europe. Blanche was present, watching with anxious countenance the effect of this subtle appeal. "My son, my son!" she said, "remember how sweet it is to God to see a son obedient to his mother; and never did mother give her child better counsel than I give you. You have no need to trouble yourself about the Holy Land; if you will but stay in your own land, which will prosper in your presence, we shall be able to send thither more men and more money than if your country were suffering and weakened by your absence." Louis listened silently, thought earnestly a moment, and then replied: "You say that I was not myself when I took the cross. Very well, since you so wish, I lay it aside; I give it back to you." With his own hand he took the sacred symbol from his shoulder and surrendered it to the bishop. Then, while those present had hardly recovered from their delight and astonishment, he spoke again: "Friends, now surely I am not lacking in sense, I am not weak or troubled in spirit; I demand my cross again; He Who knows all things

knows that no food shall pass my lips until the cross is placed once more on my shoulder."

There was no turning aside a man of such character; the preparations for the crusade went on, and Saint Louis raised the Oriflamme at Saint-Denis on June 12, 1248. We shall not tell of the crusade or of Louis's characteristic conscientiousness in seeing, before he left, that reparation was made for every act of injustice done in his kingdom, for which purpose he sent out a commission charged with holding an inquest in all parts of France. The inevitable day of separation came, the day to which Blanche looked forward as the last upon which she would see her son. She accompanied him for the first three or four days of his journey, which lay through southern France to Aigues-Mortes, and at Corbeil she received the regency, with power to act in the government through what agents she pleased and in what way she pleased. The guardianship of his children, too, Louis left to Blanche. At Cluni came the scene of final separation; the grief of Blanche can be imagined, and words would fail to help us to a realization of its intense sincerity. Her premonition was well founded; she was not to live to see Louis again.

Once more was Blanche de Castille regent of France, a heavy burden for one who had lived a life of no easy indulgence and who was now sixty years of age. Instead of peace and rest in her declining years—perchance she had hoped to retire to her own convent of Maubuisson—she must undertake the cares of government. Truly, Saint Louis was sacrificing his mother for an ambition, albeit not a vain or selfish ambition, and whatever service he may have rendered God by killing some hundreds of Mohammedans in Egypt, there is no question about the service Blanche was rendering to him and France.

To aid Blanche in her government, and also to collect an additional force for the crusade, Louis had left in France his brother, Alphonse de Poitiers, who was of real assistance to his mother. The other sons, however, Robert d'Artois and Charles d'Anjou, had sailed with the crusaders for Egypt. Blanche's first anxiety came from Henry III., who chose this opportunity to make warlike preparations, after he had refused to renew the truce with France, and who had been besieging Saint Louis with preposterous demands for the restoration of his lost provinces. But Henry contented himself with preparations, being perhaps held in check by fear of the Church, which threatened an interdict on all England if he ventured to attack France while the king was away fighting in her behalf. Relieved of this anxiety, Blanche was free to concentrate her efforts in procuring assistance for Saint Louis. But the worldly-minded Pope Innocent IV. was so busily engaged in his contest with the Emperor Frederick II. that he had little but prayers and blessings to bestow upon the crusading king; while Frederick was either unable or unwilling to contribute more than a mere pittance. At the close of the summer of 1249, Alphonse de Poitiers embarked on his voyage to lead to his brother the considerable army he had been able to collect. This was a new separation for Blanche, and one that involved her, almost at once, in the conduct of new and rather complex political problems.

Scarcely a month after the departure of Alphonse de Poitiers, his father-in-law, Count Raymond of Toulouse, died, leaving as his only heir his daughter's husband. Blanche immediately took steps to secure to her son the succession, even before she was requested to do so by a message from him. Under the terms of the treaty of 1229, she took possession of the estates of the count, and

appointed commissioners to receive the homage of the vassals on behalf of Alphonse.

Meanwhile, good news had come from Louis, who had landed in Egypt and had taken Damietta. Frequent letters passed between the queen and her son; but letters were slow in reaching their destination, and the queen was still rejoicing over the good news when Saint Louis and his army were in desperate plight. At last came the letter telling of the disastrous battle of Mansourah,—a victory in name, but as costly in its consequences as a defeat,—February 8, 1250, and of the death of the impetuous Robert d'Artois. His army was reduced by disease and incessant skirmishes with the infidels and Saint Louis himself fell sick. There was no Blanche de Castille, no tender mother, no wife there to nurse him back to health.

We have mentioned the wife of Saint Louis, and it may be as well to complete here her part in this story. She had accompanied her husband on the crusade, but had been left behind in Damietta with a strong garrison when Louis marched on to Mansourah. When the king was captured by the infidels, Marguerite lay ill in Damietta, hourly expecting the birth of her child. When the first messengers came with the news of the captivity of her husband she refused to believe them, and, it is said, had the unfortunates hanged as the bearers of false news; but there was soon no doubt that disaster had overtaken the Christian arms. Marguerite was half crazed with pain and fear; even in her sleep she fancied that the room was full of Saracens bent on killing her, and she would cry out pitifully, "Help! help!" She made an old knight, over eighty years of age, keep guard at the foot of her bed. Before the birth of her child she called this old man to her, sending everyone else from the room, and threw herself on her knees before him, begging him to grant her one

boon she would ask. "Sir knight," she said, "I enjoin you, by the faith you have sworn to me, that, if the Saracens should take this town you will cut off my head before they can capture me." And the good knight, with a sternness characteristic of the age, replied that he would surely do as she bid him, for he had already resolved to kill her rather than see her become a Saracen captive.

A son was born to the queen; in memory of the misery of these days she named him Jean Tristan. On the very day of the child's birth she learned that the Genoese and Pisan sailors, and some of the garrison, were preparing to abandon Damietta. It was a serious danger; for, the fleet once gone, what chance of rescue, or even of return to France, was there for the king and his army? In the midst of her pain Marguerite acted with a promptitude and decision far greater than one could have hoped for from the rather colorless, yielding woman who had so long submitted to the domination of her mother-in-law. She sent for the ringleaders, and besought them for God's sake not to imperil the safety of the king and the whole army: "Have pity, at least, upon this poor woman, lying here in pain, and wait but till she can get up again." Then, learning that they had just cause of complaint in that they could not get food, she took the responsibility of purchasing what provisions could be had and of feeding the sailors at the king's expense. Her prompt action saved the fleet for Louis. Even as it was, Damietta had to be evacuated, as one of the conditions of his being released, and Queen Marguerite was compelled to sail for Acre before she had entirely regained her health.

Once released and safe at Acre, Saint Louis was urged to return at once to France, whither the dreadful news of his disaster had already gone to distress Blanche de Castille; but he had left a large part of his followers prisoners

in the hands of the infidels, and under such circumstances it was useless to urge this truly noble monarch to consider his own wishes, or his own interests. He called a counsel of his barons, and announced to them: "I have come to the conclusion that, if I stay, my kingdom is in no danger of going to destruction, for Madame the Queen has many men to defend it with." He had good reason to rely upon *Madame la reine*, who had kept his heritage for him when he could not have kept it for himself. Sending back to France his brothers, Alphonse de Poitiers and Charles d'Anjou, Saint Louis lingered on in Syria.

Blanche continued to rule France and to make every effort to succor her son in his perilous position. The death of Frederick II., in December, 1250, gave a momentary hope of obtaining assistance from the empire or from the Pope. But this hope was soon dashed, for Innocent IV. was bent on continuing his quarrel with Frederick's successor, Conrad. Blanche, moreover, was seriously ill in the early part of 1251—so ill that the Pope wrote to discourage her from attempting to journey to Lyons to see him. "Your life," he wrote, "is the safeguard of so many people that you should use every endeavor and take every care to preserve or to recover the health which means so much to all." With all the benedictions and affectionate solicitude contained in this letter, the Pope was not disposed to give material assistance to Saint Louis. On the contrary, he ordered the preaching of a crusade, even in Brabant and Flanders, against the Christian emperor who was his political rival, and promised greater rewards to those who would engage in it than to those who were fighting the infidels. Blanche called a council of her vassals, who broke forth in violent wrath against the selfish and un-Christian conduct of the head of the Church. No doubt Blanche shared their resentment, and it is even

reported that she ordered the confiscation of the goods of those who ventured to engage in the Pope's crusade against the emperor, saying: "Let those who are fighting for the Pope be maintained by the Pope, and go to return no more."

While the affairs of the Church were in this state a new and dangerous movement of the common people, a movement half religious in nature, came to disturb France. A strange man, of wonderful eloquence, and exercising a powerful influence upon the peasantry, made his appearance in northern France. In a few weeks he had gathered veritable armies of the peasants, the *pastoureaux*, as they were called, who marched about the country after their mysterious leader, known only by the name of "the Master of Hungary," proclaiming that they would go to the aid of their good king. At first they committed no damage, but, growing bolder and becoming contaminated by a certain mixture of the more dangerous elements of the population, they began to manifest a peculiar unfriendliness toward priests, and soon passed to actual acts of violence. The Master of Hungary arrogated to himself powers almost miraculous, and the people believed in him. At Amiens, the first large town entered by the Pastoureaux, people sought out this man and knelt before him as if he had been a holy personage. But the priests circulated all sorts of stories about him: he was a magician in league with the devil; he was an apostate Christian, an infidel, nay, an emissary of the sultan of Egypt, charged with delivering into the hands of the Saracens a host of Christian prisoners. But, impostor or no impostor, the people had faith in him, and it was in vain for the priests to repeat or to concoct tales of his being an infidel: the very people of the most Christian nation in Europe were sullenly murmuring against Christ Himself. When the

begging friars asked for alms the people snarled a refusal at them and, calling the first poor person in sight, gave alms, saying: "Take that; in the name of Mohammed, who is greater than Christ."

The Master of Hungary and his satellites, preaching against the clergy and inciting to acts of violence, performing all the functions of priests and even claiming to perform miracles, advanced with their hordes of ignorant or vicious followers to Paris. What attitude would Blanche take? She had always had a heart to feel for the woes of the common people, and she well knew that the priests were not by any means always the friends of the poor, for she was not so blinded by religiosity as to think that the clerical habit alone could make a mere man something more than a man. At this particular time, too, she had reason to feel vexed with the clergy; was it not the Church itself that was most niggardly of funds to carry on the war in defence of the holy places? She was far too sensible a woman to look for any material help from this rabble which vowed to go to the rescue of the good king; but she was not disposed to interfere with them until she had definite proof of their wrongdoing. One can but suspect that she did not credit all that the priests reported to her of them; she herself had known and in some ways liked Raymond of Toulouse, whom the priests made out an arch fiend.

When the Pastoureaux approached Paris, therefore, she gave orders that they should not be interfered with. Sending for the Master of Hungary, she treated him with respect, asked him questions, and sent him back with some presents. The man lost his head with vainglory at this reception. Returning to his followers he announced that he had so thoroughly enchanted the queen and her people that she would approve of anything they did, and that

they might kill priests with impunity. In episcopal robes, the mitre on his head, he preached in the church of St. Eustace. Riots were precipitated by his followers, and the vast army moved on to the south, growing more and more outrageous every day. Blanche saw that it was time to act; she had made a mistake in supposing these people to be harmless, misguided peasants or religious enthusiasts. Orders were given to pursue and exterminate them. Scattered bands were overtaken here and there and dispersed, and the leaders were summarily hanged. But the final catastrophe was to take place at or near Bourges. The Pastoureaux having entered this town, engaged in looting and rapine, and the royal officers, thinking to confine them in the town, shut the gates; but the Pastoureaux broke these down, and poured out of the town, pursued by the enraged citizens. They were overtaken and brought to bay, and a veritable massacre, rather than a battle, ensued, for most of the Pastoureaux were poorly armed. The Master of Hungary was slain and torn in pieces, while his forces were dispersed. In a few weeks the country was quiet again. Only a few of the Pastoureaux really received the cross from those who had proper authority to give it, and went to the aid of Saint Louis.

During these years we find Queen Blanche acting very frequently in a judicial capacity, presiding over the court of Parliament and over the council; she seems to have continued to take an active part in all the affairs of her government. And, strange to say, we do not find the name of any one counsellor exalted above the others, as a greater favorite or as more relied on by the queen; she has her ministers, but so little part do they seem to play that France is really ruled by the queen, not by the ministers. We comment upon this because it is remarkable,

especially when we remember that, even with great kings, the names of the ministers are not often utterly obscured.

The most interesting of the queen's activities at this time are those connected with the Church; there are numberless little quarrels in which she had to intervene and hold out for the rights of the crown, but the two examples that follow will suffice to show the sort of thing with which she had to contend. The clergy of France had accorded to Saint Louis a tax of one-tenth on their property, in view of his crusade. Though this tax had been long due, the Abbey of Cluni, one of the richest and one of the most favored by the royal family, allowed month after month to elapse without making any move to pay. At length, in the early part of 1252, while the abbot was away in England, the royal bailli of Mâcon seized the château of Lourdon, belonging to the Abbey of Cluni. There was a tremendous uproar in the clerical camp; the Pope himself wrote to protest against this outrage upon the servants of God, and demanded of Blanche the restitution of the sequestered château. At the same time he instructed the Archbishop of Bourges to launch an interdict against all those who continued to hold, to guard, or to inhabit the château of Lourdon, with special exception of the queen and her family. Blanche had not, it appears, given the bailli any orders with regard to the collection of the tax, but, since he had acted, she sustained him; there was no persuading her to return the property of the abbey until the abbot had satisfied her just claims. The Pope and the abbot were compelled to accept defeat for the present; but after Blanche was dead a claim was made for indemnity, which we can only hope Saint Louis did not grant.

Another instance in which Blanche intervened is even more to her credit, since it was pure humanity, not the

jealous safeguarding of the rights of the crown, that moved her. The inhabitants of the villages of Orly, Châtenay, and some others were serfs of the canons of Notre Dame. Being unable to pay some tax imposed by their masters, the men of the villages—we mean not a few, but *all* the able-bodied men—were seized and imprisoned in the chapter house. The horrors of the Black Hole of Calcutta have been made familiar to all English readers; there are few who realize that jails as horrible, and jailers as inhuman, were not infrequent in many a period of the world's history. The condition of the prisons of France when the courageous and devoted philanthropist John Howard visited them, at the close of the eighteenth century, was such as to beggar description: how much worse must have been a prison of the thirteenth century! The unfortunate peasants, with insufficient food, water, and air, were so crowded in the prison that several of them died. News of the affair coming to Queen Blanche, she humbly prayed the canons to release their victims, and said that she would investigate the matter. The canons replied that it was none of her affair, that she should not meddle with their serfs, "whom they could take and kill and do such justice on as seemed good to them." To emphasize these rights and to revenge themselves upon the talebearers who had reported to Queen Blanche, they seized the wives and children of their prisoners, and thrust them into the same overcrowded prison. The suffering was, of course, intensified; many of the miserable wretches died. The historian tells us that Blanche "felt great pity for the people, so tormented by those whose duty it was to protect them." We do not need to be told that; but Blanche was not of the milk-and-water kind that would have wasted time in *fainéant* compassion when there was suffering which her activity could

relieve. She summoned a body of knights and citizens, gave them arms, marched straight to the prison, and ordered the doors to be broken down, herself striking the first blow, that all might see that she was not afraid to assume the responsibility for the act. Nor did her beneficent activity cease with the release of the prisoners; for she was determined that there should be no repetition of such tyranny if she could help it. She took the serfs under her special protection and confiscated the goods of the chapter of Notre Dame, which she held until such time as full satisfaction had been rendered. The serfs were enfranchised in consideration of an annual tax. But so far was she from wishing to wrong the canons, or even to interfere with their rights, if they had any, that she ordered the bishops of Paris, Orleans, and Auxerre to hold a special investigation to determine whether or not the people of Orly had owed the tax. With a woman of her character the canons vainly resorted to their favorite threat of excommunication. If they had excommunicated her, she would, in the light of history at least, have been given an absolution more purifying than any they could offer.

For the common people the great queen had always a tender heart. It was a rough and cruel age, especially for those in bondage. "And since this Queen," says an anonymous chronicler, "had great pity for such as were serfs, she ordered, in several places, that they be set free in consideration of the payment of some other dues. This she did partly because of the pity she felt for the girls in this condition, because people would not marry them, and many of them went to ruin thereby."

The last days of Blanche de Castille were drawing to a close amid sad and fruitless longing to see her son. Her health was failing; one after another of those dear to her

fell ill or passed away; the dearest of all lingered in the Holy Land, leading a forlorn hope and deaf to the entreaties of his mother that he would return. She was at Melun when, in November, 1252, she became so ill that she hastened to return to Paris. She put her affairs in order and left instructions that those whom she had unwittingly wronged should be indemnified out of her private fortune. All worldly thoughts were now put aside, and she summoned the Bishop of Paris, took the Holy Communion, and was admitted, by the prelate's decree, into the Cistercian order, becoming a nun of her Abbey of Maubuisson. Clothed in the simple garments of the sisterhood, the noble queen passed, not many days later, from the scene of her useful labors, murmuring in her last moments the words of the prayer for those in extremis: *Subvenite, sancti Dei.*

It was on November 26th or 27th, in her sixty-fourth year, that Blanche died. Over her nun's habit they placed her royal robes, and on her head the crown; thus clothed, and placed upon a bier ornamented with gold, she was borne by her sons and the great nobles through the streets of Paris to the Abbey of Saint-Denis. The next day, after a mass for the dead, the body was carried in procession to Maubuisson, where another service was held. Here, in the choir of the chapel, the body of the queen was buried, and a tomb, bearing her effigy in nun's habit, was erected. The other convent founded by her wished to have the honor of guarding her heart, which, in March of the following year, was taken to Notre Dame du Lys by the abbess, Countess Alix de Mâcon.

Let us pause awhile by the tomb before we attempt to review the character of Blanche de Castille; and meanwhile we may see how the news of her death was received by Saint Louis. He was at Jaffa when, after a long delay,

the intelligence reached him. At the very first ominous words of the papal legate who had come to break the tidings to him Saint Louis gave way to uncontrollable emotion. Consolation was unavailing; even the clergy seemed to realize that it would have been but an impertinent aggravation; and for two days no one ventured to speak to him. Then, rousing himself from the depths of his grief, he sent for that best and sturdiest of his friends, the fearless, honest, blunt Sire de Joinville, Seneschal of Champagne, who leaves us an account of what followed. When Joinville came into the presence, the king rose, and, stretching out his arms to him, cried in simple grief: "Ah! Seneschal! I have lost my mother!" Joinville replied: "Sire, I do not marvel at it, for she had to die; but I do marvel that you, a wise man, should mourn so deeply; you know that in the words of Wisdom it is said that, whatever grief a man have at his heart, none of it should be seen in his countenance; for he who does so (*i.e.*, shows his grief) rejoices the heart of his enemies and brings sorrow to his friends." As all consolation would have been inadequate to the magnitude of the loss, we do not know that anyone could have spoken better than Joinville.

The Seneschal continues: "Madame Marie de Vertus, a very good and pious woman, came to tell me that Queen Marguerite, who had rejoined the king a little before, was in great grief, and prayed me to go to her and comfort her. When I arrived I saw that she was weeping, and I said to her that he spoke truth who maintained that one ought not to believe women; for she who is dead was the person in the world whom you most hated, and yet you display such grief for her. And she told me that it was not for the Queen that she wept, but for the suffering and the grief of the King, and for her little daughter, now left in the care of men."

There is no quality more to be admired in one who attempts to write a life of some great man or woman than fearless frankness; the passages we have given are characteristic of the *Vie de Saint Louis*, by the Sire de Joinville, whose straightforward bluntness of speech is an amusing but also a valuable quality. We shall keep Joinville in mind while concluding, in brief, the story of Saint Louis's return and of the subsequent career of Marguerite.

More than a year of misery and futile battling intervened between the time when the news of his mother's death reached Louis and the time when he set sail for France. There was no hope of succor from Europe: there was no Queen Blanche to husband the resources of France that her son might continue his fight for the faith. On April 25, 1254, Saint Louis, accompanied by Marguerite, their little son Jean Tristan, and the remnant of the crusaders, embarked at Acre. The sea was rough, and when they were off the coast of Cyprus the vessel bearing the royal family ran on a sand bank. The nurses rushed frantically to arouse the queen, and asked her what they should do with the children. Marguerite, thinking all would be lost in the violence of the storm, said: "Neither waken them nor move them; let them go to God in their sleep." Saint Louis, urged to transfer himself and his family into another vessel, refused to do so, resolving to take the risk with those who had to remain and might be forced to land in Cyprus: "If I leave this vessel, there are on it five hundred men, each one of whom loves his life as much as I love mine, and who may have to stay in this island, and they may never return to their own country. That is why I had rather place in the hands of God my person, my wife, and my children, than cause such great suffering to the many people in this ship."

Joinville narrates another accident during this voyage, one which will recall the instructions for extinguishing one's candle given in a previous chapter. It seems that one of the queen's ladies, having undressed her, carelessly threw over the little iron lantern in which the candle was burning an end of the cloth she had used to wrap up the queen's head. The cloth caught fire, and in its turn set fire to the bedding, which was all ablaze when the queen awoke. Jumping out of bed *toute nue*, she seized the blazing stuff and threw it overboard, and put out the little fire which had started in the wood of the bed. The cry of fire arose, however, and Joinville tells us that he went to keep the sailors quiet, and later asked Marguerite to go to the king, who had been disturbed and excited by the noise.

We hear little more of Marguerite after this crusade. In spite of his affection and respect for her, and in spite of his gratitude for her conduct during his first crusade, Saint Louis did not think his wife capable of playing the rôle of Blanche de Castille, to which some say she unwisely aspired. When he was preparing for his second crusade, in 1270, he not only did not leave her the regency, although she was to remain in France, but he took unusual care to regulate her expenditures and to hedge about her prerogatives. He forbade her to receive any presents for herself or her children, to meddle with the administration of justice, or to choose any person for her service without the consent of the council of regents. That his precautions were not altogether without excuse, we see when we learn that Marguerite was already thinking about securing her position, in case of her husband's death, by making her son Philippe promise under oath that he would remain in tutelage until he was thirty years of age; that he would take no councillor without her approval; that

he would inform her of all designs hostile to her influence; that he would make no treaty with his uncle, Charles d'Anjou; and that he would keep these engagements secret. The young Philippe had himself absolved from his oath by the Pope. The ambition of Marguerite, however, died with the husband whom she had loved and whom all Europe mourned. The good King Louis is a figure so heroic in some of its aspects that one must pause and take thought before venturing on any criticism: his motives cannot be impugned, and it were an ungrateful task to find fault with his deeds in any particular.

Marguerite lived on long after her husband in the convent she had founded in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel, which she gave to the nuns in perpetuity, reserving only a life interest for her daughter, Blanche. It was here that she was living when she had the joy of hearing proclaimed the canonization of Louis IX., the saintly King of France. This was just before her death in 1295.

There are figures in history which have become woefully distorted in the disfiguring mists of centuries, and others which have been not less wronged by prejudice, partisanship, or conscious or unconscious misrepresentation. These—at least some of these—have been in part indemnified and set right before the world: Louis XI. in France, and his contemporary Richard III. in England; Cleopatra, Catherine de' Medici, Mary of England, all these and a host of others, we are told now and then, have been misunderstood by the world; nay, in this century of universal charity, this century which is undertaking the task of righting all the wrongs accumulated from the past, one can find apologists for the enemy of mankind himself. The moral of this homily is—it may be apparent to some of my readers—that if you are either very good or very bad you get much talked about in history: there will be

some to defend you no matter how bad you are, and some to denounce you no matter how good you are. But if you simply do your duty, without fear and without advertisement, little will be said of you; history, at least in traditions still partly ruling, does not dignify with the epithet "great" the steady day-laborers who go about their task and complete it in silence. This, I would imply, is partly the reason why Blanche de Castille has never been heralded as great, and why her work in the upbuilding of the French monarchy is taken as a matter of course, and not praised like, for example, the more brilliant exploits of the "Grande Monarque" who was to do so much to undermine the power of that monarchy.

The fame of the mother is eclipsed by the peculiar glory of the son; but would it not be fair to ask how much of the excellence of Louis the man, how much of the glory of Louis the king, was due to Blanche de Castille? It cannot be questioned that she found France in a condition most perilous, threatened with the loss of all that two reigns had won for the royal power. A glance at the history of her career will show that she not only averted this danger, but that the crown was stronger when she began to relinquish her authority than it had been under Louis VIII. She reduced her rebellious vassals to submission; she more than held her own against England; she ended the war against Raymond of Toulouse, and reserved for France the control, immediate or ultimate, of the greater part of his dominions; and these things she accomplished, not merely by force, but by wise and patient policy. Louis IX. owed his crown to Blanche's care as regent; it is not improbable that he owed her as much during the years when he himself was on the throne and she but a counsellor. History is silent on many points in this connection, but it might be noted that it was through disregard

of her earnest advice that he entered on the crusade which resulted so disastrously. She knew that, even if it had been successful from the point of view of the Church, it could but be dangerous, perhaps even ruinous, for France. This is one case in which we know Saint Louis rejected his mother's guidance, and what came of it is matter of history; might there not be many another act of his, more successful in its issue, for which the credit should go to Blanche?

As a queen, Blanche de Castille was more than capable; it is only the absence of great battles, great social, religious, and economic movements, during her ascendency, that hinders our calling her, without reservation, a great queen. When we look at Blanche the woman, we are confronted with a like difficulty. Shall we say she was a saint? Her son, the son whom she bore, whom she reared with unexampled care, whom she watched over all her life, has been called a saint, and there is no one to say him nay. Shall we say that the mother of a saint is, *ex officio*, or even by courtesy, also a saint? We cannot claim sanctity for Queen Blanche: there was in her a touch of the temper of her grandmother, Eleanor of Guienne of wicked memory, or mayhap a trace of the Plantagenet. It is interesting to note that the best qualities of the vigorous Henry II. tempered the woman's nature of this daughter of Spain and gave her the stamina, the unconquerable spirit, which alone could save her. This Plantagenet temper is under excellent control in Queen Blanche; so excellent, indeed, that under some circumstances she seems cold. She is not cold, she is cool, a very different thing; no danger, no excitement, no sudden gust of resentment at an insult, can make her lose her head and act rashly. She is a thorough politician, making her feelings, her emotions, subservient to her will, and even, as we

have hinted, playing the lover for the sake of controlling an amorous and uncertain vassal. Danger nerves her to action, and she acts with promptitude and firmness. At the defects in her character we have already hinted in part; the fundamental one, when we consider Blanche the woman, was her love of power. Ambitious she was; and yet, when we say this, we must not forget that she sought power not for herself, but for her son. How quietly she relinquishes her authority, and how ready she is, even when that authority is at its height, to tell Thibaud de Champagne that he owes his preservation to "the great goodness of my son, the King, who came to your aid"! But it was her jealousy of Marguerite de Provence that was the great blemish on Blanche's character. It was a meanness unworthy of a nature so generous and so faithful; we can attempt no defence, we can only express regret. Her personality exerted a powerful influence over those with whom she came in contact, and from all the best men of her time she received due meed of praise. Compare her with other women of her day, and there is none who can be placed beside Blanche *la bonne reine,* or Blanche *la bonne mère.*

Chapter VII

The Romances of Chivalry and Love

VII

THE ROMANCES OF CHIVALRY AND LOVE

BESIDE such a figure as that of Blanche de Castille, the women of whom we might next speak would seem pale ghosts, mere masks and shadows; and, even then, not always pleasing ones. There are, in fact, no immediate successors of Blanche and her daughter-in-law in the history of France; there is an interregnum, so to speak, of good, great, even of notorious women; in this interregnum, therefore, let us see how chivalry and literature were treating woman, what was the ideal, and what was the real woman in the artistic world at this time.

Between the tenth and the sixteenth centuries Europe saw the birth, the growth, the culmination, the decay, and finally the displacement of those ideals and those customs which we associate with the word "chivalry." The subject of chivalry, interesting in itself, is also one of peculiar interest for us, since chivalry affected in no small degree the condition of women; but with its primal origin we shall not attempt to deal: we shall dig up no roots, but only do our best to describe the glorious tree itself and the soil in which it flourished. We shall find that chivalry, like all other earthly things, has its leprous spots, which one must keep out of sight if one would pour forth genuine and unchecked enthusiasm; yet the good and the bad alike must be understood if we would have a just conception of the whole.

We have seen in the case of the troubadours something of the nature of the extravagant amorous devotion avowed for his lady by the knightly poet. Though this exaggerated passion and romance is one of the concomitants, it is not the fundamental idea or the best part of chivalry. Originally, perhaps, a mere association for mutual defence and support, the order of knighthood soon came to have a deeper and a better purpose, a wider significance; it assumed the sanctity of a religious institution, for which long years of careful preparation were deemed necessary, and which imposed serious duties.

To defend the weak and the oppressed was what the soldier of God swore to do; and first in the list of those needing his defence were women. The knight was not only the sworn defender of woman from all physical wrong and oppression, but he must guard the honor of her name. Courteous and gentle he must be toward women himself, and from others less gentle he must compel at least outward respect. In the statutes of many an order of knighthood we find provisions like those set forth by Louis de Bourbon when, in 1363, he established the order of the Golden Shield: "He enjoined (the knights) to abstain from swearing and blaspheming the name of God; above all, he enjoined them to honor *dames et damoiselles,* not submitting to hear ill spoken of them; because from them, after God, comes the honor men receive; so that speaking ill of women, who from the weakness of their sex have no means of defending themselves, is losing all sense of honor, and shaming and dishonoring oneself." It was also about this time that Marshal Boucicaut established the order of the Knights of the Green Shield, fourteen in number, whose special purpose was the defence of women, and on whose shields was a blazon representing a woman clothed in white. This same sentiment we find persisting

even in Brantôme: "If an honest woman would maintain her firmness and constancy, her devoted servitor must not spare even his life to defend her if she runs the least risk in the world, whether of her honor or of evil-speaking; even as I have seen some who have stopped all the wicked tongues of the court when they came to speak ill of their ladies, whom, according to the devoirs of chivalry, we are bound to serve as champions in their affliction."

The devotion to woman which we find becoming the dominant feature of the chivalrous ideal rises at times to sheer extravagance, mere moonshine madness. A knight vows devotion to his ladylove; to prove that he is the truest lover in the world and she the fairest dame, he wears a patch over one eye and engages in mortal combat with anyone who ventures to smile at this absurdity. Another takes his station on the highway and compels every passing knight to joust with him, because he has vowed to break three hundred lances in thirty days in the honor of his lady. Or there is Geoffrey Rudel, who falls in love with the Countess of Tripoli on hearsay; they say she is the most beautiful and lovable woman in the world; therefore he loves her, and therefore he goes on a crusade that he may see the lady. On the voyage he falls ill, and lands in Tripoli sick nigh unto death. The lovely countess, touched by the tales of his devotion, comes to his bedside; at once the glow of health returns to the dying lover, who praises God for preserving his life long enough to permit him to see his lady. When he died, soon after,—for the sight of the lady did not effect a permanent cure,—the countess had him buried in the church of the Templars, while she herself took the veil.

But if there is moonshine madness in the ideals of chivalry, there are also better things. Devotion to woman rises to the point of adoration; why should it not, when at

its base is really the fervor of worship, the mystic worship of her whom the Middle Ages delighted to honor, Mary, the Mother of God? Let us content ourselves here with what Lecky has so well said in his *History of European Morals:* "Whatever may be thought of its theological propriety, there can be little doubt that the Catholic reverence for the Virgin has done much to elevate and purify the ideal of woman, and to soften the manners of men. It has had an influence which the worship of the Pagan goddesses could never possess, for these had been almost destitute of moral beauty, and especially of that kind of moral beauty which is peculiarly feminine. It supplied in a great measure the redeeming and ennobling element in that strange amalgam of religious, licentious, and military feeling which was formed around women in the age of chivalry, and which no succeeding change of habit or belief has wholly destroyed."

The fact that this love of the Virgin finally became a recognized force is a proof of how much stronger are love and romance than theology and dogma; for the strict religious theory of the Church had always been opposed to the elevation of women to a very high plane of adoration. While the Fathers of the Church praised and practised chastity as the highest virtue, and in consequence honored virgins above all others, they never forgot that it was the sin of woman which had "brought death into the world and all our woe"; they never forgot to twit the daughters of Eve with this fact, and to call them *vas infirmius*—"the weaker vessel." All through the ages when Christianity was struggling to maintain its own, the saints and martyrs, the holy hermits, in whom the Church delighted, fled the very sight of woman, and shuddered at her touch as at a contamination. Yet, in spite of this, or along with this, there was growing the adoration of a woman, the mother

of Him whom the world called the Son of God. Little was known about her; so much the better for the pious hagiologists, who thought they did no wrong in piecing out scant fact with abundant legend. A regular cult of the Virgin arose, reaching such proportions that the Church had to do something to recognize it. Numerous festivals were established in her honor, some with the sanction of the Church, some without that sanction, some celebrated throughout Christendom, some only locally: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Purification, the Assumption.

The mystic worship, the tendency to find hidden meanings in things of the most ordinary appearance to the lay eye, the extravagant symbolism, were at their height in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The scholastic theologians and sermon writers applied their fantastic methods to all phases of the religious life; so we must not be surprised to find them treating even the Virgin in this way. One of the extraordinary instances which we can give occurs in a sermon delivered in Paris by the Chancellor of the university, Stephen Langton, later Archbishop of Canterbury. His name, by the way, is Latinized for us as *Stephanus de Langeduna,* whence it was easy and flattering to deduce *Stephanus Linguæ tonantis.* As a text the preacher takes nothing more nor less than a popular song, *Bele Aalis main se leva,* of which the following is the sense: "Sweet Alice arose in the early morn, dressed herself and adorned her fair body, and went into the garden. There she found five flowrets, of which she made a chaplet covered with roses. By my faith, therein has she betrayed thee, thou who lovest not." It is a little love song; and the author, whoever he may be,—probably some forgotten strolling minstrel who saw the girl go into the garden and wrought the incident to suit his fancy,—certainly had no religious intent. But Stephen

Langton endeavors to make a mystic application of the song to the Virgin, and, as he says, "thus to turn evil into good." Let me quote a few lines of the sermon to show how this *tour de force* was accomplished. *"Videamus quæ sit* Bele Aeliz. . . . Cele est bele Aeliz *de qua sic dicitur: Speciosa ut gemma splendida ut luna et clara ut sol, rutilans quasi Lucifer inter sidera,* etc. . . . *Hoc nomen* Aeliz *dicitur ab* a *quod est* sine *et* lis litis, *quasi sine lite, sine reprehensione, sine mundana fœce."* It may be of interest to translate this as a specimen of the sermon of the first quarter of the thirteenth century: "Let us now see who is Bele Aeliz. . . . She is bele Aeliz of whom it is said: Beautiful as a jewel, shining as the moon and brilliant as the sun, glistening as Lucifer among the stars, etc. . . . This name Aeliz is formed from *a,* which means without, and *lis, litis,* which is as much as to say without dispute, without blame, without mixture of the dregs of the world." The worthy theologian then proceeds to what is undoubtedly the most difficult problem of his interpretation—to demonstrate the connection of the garden, the chaplet, and the five flowers with the Virgin. "Who are these flowers? Faith, hope, charity, humility, virginity. These flowers did the Holy Ghost find in the blessed Virgin Mary . . ." The closing verses are, he says, directed against pagans, heretics, blasphemers, whom he scripturally addresses thus: "Depart, ye accursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

The enthusiasm of the clergy in behalf of the Virgin was matched by that of the people. Nothing was more popular than the hymn to the Virgin, scarcely distinguishable, in the ardor of some specimens preserved to us, from the contemporary love songs to women of flesh and blood. Clerks and laymen composed these songs, vying with each

other in the fervor of the sentiments they expressed, writing in Latin, in French, in mixed Latin and French, praising the mere physical beauty and grace of her whom they called *rose des roses et fleur des fleurs*. One can read these things without shock only when one remembers that there was nothing but devotion of a purely spiritual kind intended by them, a fact of which it is sometimes hard to persuade oneself. As an example, and not an extreme one, it might do to substitute merely the name *Marie* for that of *Aalis* in the song used for Langton's sermon.

Besides these songs there were plays representing miracles ascribed to the Virgin, and legends without end grew up in which she was the intercessor for poor mortality. She becomes almost identified with the attribute of Mercy assigned to the Godhead, and some of the souls alleged to have been saved by her are not always worth the saving, according to modern standards of morality. A legend, repeated in many forms, tells us, for example, of a clerk of Chartres (presumably a clerk in the cathedral), "proud, vain, rude, and so worldly and licentious in his habits that he could not be restrained." With all his rakish ways, however, there was one thing that this man of God never omitted to do: "He would never pass before the image of Our Lady . . . without kneeling;" and once on his knees, "his face wet with tears, he saluted her many times most humbly, and beat his breast." Now the clerk was killed by an enemy of his, and then the world began to speak ill of him, and, on account of his notorious bad habits, they buried his body in a ditch outside Chartres. Thirty days, or nights, afterward, "she from whom springs all pity, all mildness and sweetness and love, and who never forgets her servants," appeared in a dream to one of the other clerks and reproached him bitterly for the dishonor done her servitor, of whose piety she then told

him. The clergy of the city marched out to the grave of the clerk; and when it was opened they found "a flower in his mouth, so fresh and full of bloom that it seemed as if it had just blown there"; while the tongue with which he used to praise the Virgin was preserved from corruption, "as clear as is a rose in May." The moral of this story, one would think, would be anything but salutary; it is only when one recognizes the simple, unsophisticated piety which inspired it, and reflects upon its teaching of greater gentleness, greater charity in judging others, that one can admire it.

To the mediæval mind, indeed, the Virgin was not very unlike a heroine of romance, and it was no disrespect to deck her out in fancy as gorgeously as some fair Elaine or Iseut. The story of this latter heroine, whose name no two will spell alike,—Iseut, Ysoult, Isolde, Isout, Ysolt,—is one typical of the age of romance and chivalry, and one which we shall give, despite its familiarity. By way of preface it may be well to remark that the story has been told so often that the variations introduced by this or that reviser are not to be distinguished from the original.

The mother of Tristan was Isabelle, sister of King Mark of Cornwall, who, dying when her son was born, asked that he be called Tristan, or Tristram, "that is as much as to say, sorrowful birth." The boy was hated by his uncle, King Mark, who tried to make away with him; but the youth escaped to France, where he won the love of King Faramond's daughter, and was in consequence compelled to flee again to Cornwall, where a temporary reconciliation with Mark was effected. Then there came out of Ireland a knight, Sir Morhoult, to claim tribute due to the Irish king by King Mark. Tristan fought with the stranger, wounded him unto death, and was himself wounded by the poisoned lance of his adversary. Only in the country

where the poison was brewed was there hope of succor for the wounded hero; and accordingly Tristan set out for Ireland, in a boat without sails and without rudder, albeit well victualled. The helpless boat, however, bore its precious burden safely to Ireland.

The wounded knight, who concealed his real name, was kindly received by the Irish king, who gave him into the charge of his wife and his daughter, La Belle Iseut, both skilled leeches. The latter, fair and golden-haired, altogether lovely, became the special attendant of the wounded knight: "And when she had searched his wound, she found in the bottom of his wound that there was poison, and within a little while she healed him, and therefore Tristan cast great love to la Belle Iseut, for she was at that time the fairest lady in the world, and then Sir Tristan taught her to harp, and she began to have a great fantasy unto Sir Tristan." Unfortunately the mother of Iseut discovered by chance that Tristan was the slayer of her brother, Sir Morhoult. Tristan must leave, and nothing but the love of Iseut and the honor of the king saved him from the wrath of the queen and enabled him to escape unmolested.

For long years we hear no more of la Belle Iseut in Tristan's life, which is wholly devoted to winning himself a place at the Round Table and putting to shame his wicked uncle, King Mark. But he had never forgotten Iseut, and praised her so enthusiastically that King Mark conceived a desire to have her for his wife. Tristan, despatched to Ireland to fetch Iseut to be his uncle's bride, was kindly received on account of his honorable mission, and of the great renown he had won. He made a formal demand for the princess: "I desire that ye will give me la Belle Iseut, your daughter, not for myself, but for mine uncle King Mark, that shall have her to wife, for so have

I promised him." "Alas," said the king, "I had liever than all the land that I have ye would wed her yourself." "Sir, an I did, then were I shamed for ever in this world, and false of my promise."

All was made ready for the voyage, and la Belle Iseut was committed to the care of Tristan: "a fairer couple or one more meet for marriage had no man seen." She was accompanied into the strange land by her gentlewoman, dame Brangian, to whom the Queen of Ireland had given a powerful love philtre to be administered to the husband and wife on the wedding day: whoso drank of that philtre with another, should love that other with a love that knows no ending. By a fatal error, it was to Tristan and Iseut that the philtre was given during the voyage; and from that time an invincible passion drew them toward each other. Love so overmastered Tristan that he was false to his knightly vows, false to the trust imposed, and yet happy in his guilty love for the betrothed of King Mark. And Iseut returned his love, and moaned at the thought of Mark.

When they reached the court of Cornwall some stratagem must be devised to prevent the King from discovering that his bride had been unfaithful; but it is always easy for the romancer to extricate himself from entanglements that seem to the ordinary mind hopelessly involved, and the solution generally suggests fresh complications. In this case it was arranged that the lady-in-waiting, Brangian, should personate the bride at night, trusting that King Mark, fuddled with wine and sleep, would not discover the fraud. The scheme was entirely successful; King Mark suspected no wrong. But la Belle Iseut, that gentle lady whom all loved, determined to leave no witness to the shame of herself and Tristan, hired two murderers to slay the faithful Brangian! More pitiful than Iseut,

the murderers were smitten with compassion and merely carried off their victim and left her bound fast to a tree, from which she was rescued by the gallant Saracen knight, Sir Palamedes. Palamedes, indeed, was also one of Iseut's lovers, and had loved her in Ireland before she met Tristan. But Iseut scorned him now as she had scorned him then: her whole heart was given to Tristan, for Tristan was a knight of greater prowess than he. Iseut loved Tristan, and not her husband; the husband at length grew suspicious, and the lover was forced to flee for his life.

Many adventures befell him, but his heart was still with la Belle Iseut. Wounded once more by a poisoned arrow, he could no longer return to Iseut to be cured, and bethought him of his cousin, Iseut de la Blanche Main, a lady skilled in surgery, who lived in Brittany. To Iseut of the White Hand, then, went Tristan, and a new and most curious episode in the love story began. For the new Iseut cured Tristan, but fell in love with him, and loved him passionately. He could not return her love, for he had not forgotten la Belle Iseut, but out of gratitude he married her; and Iseut of the White Hand, not knowing that she had not all her husband's love, was happy in what she had.

Tristan made a confidant of his wife's brother, Peredor, telling him such marvels of the beauty of la Belle Iseut that Peredor was half in love by hearsay, and quite in love when he and Tristan journeyed into Cornwall and saw the lady. She seemed for a moment flattered by the new love, and played the coquette till Tristan, driven to madness, wandered off into the forest; and the heart of Iseut was sad and sick of longing and regret. Here he dwelt, till one day he was captured by King Mark, who failed to recognize his nephew in the naked madman, and

confined him within the high walled garden. But la Belle Iseut came forth to see the man, and Tristan, knowing her even in his madness, turned away his head and wept. Then a little dog that Iseut had always with her, smelt Tristan, and knew him, and leapt upon him; for this dog had Iseut kept by her every day since Tristan gave her to Iseut in the first days of their love. And thereupon Iseut fell down in a swoon, and so lay a great while; and when she might speak, she said: "My lord Sir Tristan, blessed be God ye have your life! And now I am sure you shall be discovered by this little dog, for she will never leave you; and also I am sure that as soon as my lord King Mark shall know you he will banish you out of the country of Cornwall or else he will destroy you. For God's sake, mine own lord, grant King Mark his will, and then draw you unto the court of King Arthur, for there are ye beloved."

King Mark banished Tristan forever, and to the court of King Arthur went Tristan, winning there ever fresh fame, until finally King Mark himself, moved by jealousy and envy, came to destroy Tristan. But the good Arthur reconciled uncle and nephew, and Tristan went to free Cornwall from a horde of invading Saxons. The intrigue with Iseut was renewed, and Mark confined Tristan in a dungeon, whence he was released only by an insurrection of Mark's oppressed subjects. Iseut eloped with him, and the two wandered in the forest like true lovers, this fair lady and her bold knight, and were finally received at Joyeuse Garde by the gallant Lancelot, where they dwelt till a fresh reconciliation with King Mark brought about the restoration of Iseut to her husband.

We must not forget the other Iseut, the white-handed lady whom Tristan married and left behind in Brittany. The fact of her existence came again to his recollection now, and he returned to her. She was in dire distress

and longing for her husband; but from her caressing arms he fled again to put down a rebellion in his dominions. Once more sorely wounded, once more he was cured by the white hands of his wife, whom he nevertheless soon afterward abandoned to renew the intrigue with the rival Iseut in Cornwall. But he was again discovered and put to flight by the jealous husband. The spirit of restlessness would not let him be quiet with his wife, the knight must be up and doing; and while he engaged in a reckless adventure he was grievously wounded, so grievously that death seemed nigh and not to be put off by the ministrations of Iseut of the White Hand. Tristan sent a messenger in haste for la Belle Iseut: "Come with all speed, if you love me! And that I may know you are on the ship let the sails be white; if you cannot come, let the sails be black." Iseut hastened toward her lover, with feverish impatience, blaming winds and waves and slow messengers. Meanwhile, the neglected wife, Iseut of the White Hand, discovered the truth and grew wildly jealous. Tristan lay on his bed in agony, waiting for news of the ship bearing la Belle Iseut. The jealous wife, too, kept watch, and when the white sails of the vessel told her that her rival was coming, was almost at hand, jealousy got the mastery: "I see the ship," she cried to Tristan. "What color are her sails?" asked he. "Black, all black," she cried. The sick knight fell back upon his bed, moaning out reproaches upon the Iseut who had forsaken him in his need:

"Amie Yoslt! treis fez a dit,
A la quarte rent l'esperit."

[Iseut, my love! three times he cried, at the fourth he rendered up his soul.]

"Iseut is come out of the ship; in the street she hears the lamentations. . . . An old woman told her: 'Lovely

lady, so help me God, we have here a sorrow greater than men ever had before: *Tristan li pruz, li francs, est mort* [Tristan the brave and noble is dead].' . . . All dishevelled went Iseut through the streets and into the palace where the body lay. Then she turned her to the east and prayed for him pitifully: 'Tristan, my love, when I see you lie dead, I should live no longer. You are dead because of my love, and I die, *ami,* of grief because I could not come in time.' Then she lay herself beside him, embraced him, . . . and in that same moment yielded up her spirit."

The reader will note almost at once the similarity of this tale to one famous in Greek legend, that of Theseus and the Minotaur; and there are several details, necessarily omitted in the summary we have given, which tend to make this similarity still more marked. But the matter in which we are more interested is the character of the heroine. One might remark that there are certain features in la Belle Iseut not very unlike those of Andromeda, so readily consoled by Dionysius. The lady Iseut is a typical heroine of the romances, and as such we may comment upon those of her characteristics which seem most noteworthy.

The love motive of the romance is, to begin with, as strong as the motive of pure adventure; it is, indeed, the love story which serves as the thread to bind the whole together. This shows a marked change in the importance of women in the eyes of those who wrote to please the world. But the relations of the heroine to the hero are most amazing. Not only is Iseut very forward, more than ready to confess her love and to give full response to that of Tristan, but she is all this with the full consciousness that she is doing wrong. The poet, realizing that the moral of his story might be brought in question, invented

the love potion: being under the spell of enchantment the lovers are not responsible.

Whether we shall acquit the lovers at the bar of romantic justice or not, we cannot forget that their entire story is based upon guilty passion, which seems to have a peculiar fascination for the romancer: it is the same, to cite but one example out of the many that could be adduced, in the story of Lancelot and Guinever, with the episode of Elaine. To be sure, in both cases we have mentioned, the highest honor is denied the hero: it is not for the guilty Tristan, false to his knightly oath, nor yet for the chivalrous but guilty Lancelot to win the Holy Grail; and we are not left in doubt, we are told that only the pure in life could win that honor. And then for Iseut, though she is fair and much beloved, there is a pathetic end, an end that brings no crowning happiness, no reward; but punishment.

One trait in the character of Iseut is disconcerting to those who cherish romantic ideals: her cruelty. We could forgive her the love for Tristan, and we learn to feel for her, as we read the romance, some part of the passion that instilled itself into Tristan's veins with the love draught; but what shall we say when she deliberately plans the murder of a defenceless woman, and one who had performed service unexampled in its fidelity and sacrifice?

If Iseut represented the poetic ideal in the age of chivalry, was the real woman of that age like Iseut? We can answer, unhesitatingly, no. The conditions of life in the romances were very highly idealized, and certain forms in the romance became purely conventional. The heroine must always be more beautiful than tongue can tell, and she must, in the end, win her lover, or be merciful to him, according as she began in disdain or in love sickness.

Numerous adventures, wildly fantastic in character, preceded this consummation; but readers even in that day got to such a point that their jaded palates could no longer be tickled even by the choicest extravagances. Men knew that in real life they did not love in that way; and women knew it, too, though they were perhaps slower to confess it. At any rate, the reaction from the extreme type of romantic idealization of woman began even while the romance of chivalry was trying to persuade its readers that all women were like Iseut, Guinever, Elaine, and that these were angels.

The reaction against the ideal of chivalry in literature took two main directions, the one, more purely comic or realistic, representing the woman of the middle classes, the other, more intellectual and satiric, representing woman in general but especially the lady. The first is represented, we may say, by the great *Roman du Renard* and those short popular tales which strolling minstrels were wont to recite, the *Fabliaux*. The second we find chiefly in the *Roman de la Rose* and its numerous progeny.

Renard is, of course, the central personage in the gigantic beast epic, but we hear not a little of his wife Hermeline or Erme, of madam wolf, Dame Hersent, and of Harouge, the leopardess. They play before us a little game, which we know is the game of life as women lived it in the days when Renard was still a famous personage. To give but one episode, from *Renard le Nouveau,* by Jacquemart Gelée, end of the thirteenth century, Renard becomes the confidant of Noble (the lion), and learns of his amour with Dame Harouge; forthwith the subtle Renard begins to intrigue, until at last Harouge becomes his mistress. Besieged in Maupertuis by Noble, Renard sends a flattering love letter to each of his old flames, the lioness, the wolf, and the leopardess. The three ladies

are delighted with the proposals of the charming Maître Renard. They draw lots to see which shall possess forever the affections of the irresistible Lothario; the lot falls to Dame Hersent, and the three ladies write a joint letter to inform Renard of their choice, a choice not very pleasing to Renard, who is, moreover, provoked because they have exchanged confidences. His revenge is at once planned. Going to court dressed as a charlatan, he gives to Noble a precious talisman by means of which, he says, any deceived husband can learn of his wife's infidelities; and Noble, Isengrin (the wolf), and the leopard are eager to test the virtues of the talisman. The ensuing dreadful revelations may be imagined. The guilty wives, well beaten by their wrathful husbands, flee from the court and are kindly received by crafty Renard, who forthwith establishes a harem. It is a pleasantly humorous story, and the conditions of real life are distinctly reflected, while the satiric intent is not enough to distort the reflection.

In the *Fabliaux,* however, woman is even more clearly portrayed as she really was, or at least as she seemed to the men. A large part of Old French literature, as one critic has remarked, is devoted to exposing and discussing the misfortunes of marriage; and in these relations the deceived husband is, we might say, clown paramount. The authors of the *Fabliaux*—which were written to amuse the bourgeois as well as the knight—"invented or discovered anew talismans that revealed their misfortunes (as husbands): the enchanted mantle which grows either longer or shorter suddenly when put on by an unfaithful wife, the cup from which none but happy husbands can drink. . . . Our tellers of tales invented a whole cycle of feminine tricks and ruses. . . . The women of the Fabliaux shrink from no stratagem: they

can persuade their husbands, one that he is covered by an invisible cloak, another that he is a monk, or a third that he is dead." Contending with them or seeking to outwit them is of no avail, says the author of these tales, for *mout se femme de renardise,*—many a foxy trick does woman know,—and *fols est qui femme espie et guette,*—he is a fool who spies upon a woman.

The story of one of these triumphs of beauty over wisdom will illustrate the best type of the *Fabliaux;* it is called the *Lai d'Aristote.* When Alexander had conquered India, he rested in shameful sloth, a slave to love for a young Hindoo princess. Aristotle, master of all wisdom, reproved his quondam pupil for this neglect of grave matters; and the Hindoo girl, perceiving Alexander's unhappy frame of mind, discovered what had produced it. She will be revenged on the crabbed old scholar; ere noon of the next day she will make him forget grammar and logic, if Alexander will only allow her free scope, and he shall see Aristotle's defeat if he will watch from a window opening on the garden. In the early morn, while the dew was on the grass and the birds were just beginning to sing, she tripped out into the garden, her corsage loosely fastened, her golden hair waving wildly down her neck; and as she picked her way hither and thither among the flowers, her petticoat daintily lifted, she sang sweet little songs of love. Master Aristotle, at his books, heard the singer, and "such a sweet memory she stirred in his heart that he shut his book." "Alas," he said, "what is the matter with my heart? Here am I, old and bald, pale and thin, and a philosopher more sour than any yet known or heard of." The damsel gathered flowers and wove a garland for herself, singing the while so sweetly, so enticingly, that the sour philosopher gave way, opened his window, and talked to her, nay, came out to her and courted her like a very

lover, offering to risk for her sake body and soul. She asked not so much by way of proof of his devotion. "It is merely a little whim of mine," she said, "if you will gratify me in that, I might love you." The whim is, that he should let her ride about the garden on his back. "And you must have a saddle on: I shall go more gracefully." Love won the day, and there was the foremost scholar in the world prancing about on all fours like a colt, with a saucy girl on his back, when Alexander appeared at the window. The pedagogue was not dismayed; with the saddle and bridle upon him, he looked up at the king: "Sire, tell me if I was not right to fear love for you, in all the ardor of youth, since love has harnessed me thus, I who am old and withered! I have combined precept and example: it is for you to profit by them."

Sometimes the poet of the *Fabliau* pauses to describe his heroine and her costume; now it is a lively country maiden, barefooted, with her clothes all wet from the armful of water-cress she has gathered; now it is a coquette finishing her toilette before the mirror, which she makes a little page hold while she binds up her tresses and flirts with him; and now it is a party of ladies seated in some castle bower, embroidering heraldic devices on the banners of their knights. Then there is a jolly story of three *commères* of Paris, the wife of Adam de Gonesse, her niece Marie Clipe, and Dame Tifaigne, milliner, who tell their husbands that they are going on a pilgrimage, oh! a pious pilgrimage, on the feast of the Three Kings of Cologne. They evade their watchful but too credulous spouses, and here they are seated at an inn table, where one gets "as good wine as ever grew; it is health itself; 'tis a wine clear, sparkling, strong, fine, fresh, soft to the tongue, and sweet and pleasant to swallow." The good cheer begins with much eating of fat goose, fritters, onions,

cheese, almonds, pears, and nuts, while the trio joins in singing:

> Commères, menons bon revel!
> Tels vilains l'escot paiera
> Qui ja du vin n'ensaiera."

[Gossips, let's revel and frolic to our heart's content! The poor devil who has never put away wine will pay the score.] And then, the meal over, they come "out of the tavern into the street," not a little exhilarated, one may fancy, by this famous wine, and away they go singing to the fair.

Not all the pictures of women are as innocently amusing or mirthful as this one; on the contrary, the general attitude of the authors of the *Fabliaux* is distinctly unflattering, not to say hostile. Sometimes it is merely one of the infinite variations on the idea of the scarcity of virtuous wives; it is Chicheface, the cow who feeds on virtuous wives, and who is all but starved to death, while Bigorne, with less rigorous ideas as to the morals of her food, is choked, fit to burst. But in general the notion prevails, as one writer himself puts it, that "woman is of too feeble intellect; she laughs at nothing, she cries at nothing; she will turn from love to hate in a moment. The strong hand alone can control her; and yet, beating is useless, for her faults are inherent; nature made her captious, obstinate, perverse; she is an inferior creature, by nature degraded and vicious."

But slightly different from this is the sentiment of the *Roman de la Rose*, when we take this huge work in its complete and most influential form. The *Roman de la Rose*, to rehearse a few well-known facts, was composed between 1225 and 1275 by two poets, one writing later than the other and under somewhat different inspiration. The story is allegorical, and its main thread has to do

with the adventures of a young man, at once the hero and the poet, in his attempt to pluck a beautiful rose, which he finds hedged about with thorns in a garden full of marvels. In his attempts to reach the rose the lover is alternately aided and hindered by various allegorical personages, whose names suggest the part they play, such as Kindly Greeting and Modesty and Vanity and Pity. To the poet who first undertook the telling of this marvellous allegory, Guillaume de Lorris, woman is a superior being, almost an angel; and love is a divine thing. Love is the theme of his poem:

> "Ce est li Romanz de la Rose
> Où l'Art d'Amours est toute enclose."

[This is the Romance of the Rose, wherein is all the art of love.] And it is real love that he teaches; for the God of Love himself commands the lover: "It is my wish and my command that you centre all the devotion of your heart in one place." His lover is gentle and courteous; we are in an atmosphere not very different from that of the romances of chivalry.

When Jean de Meung undertakes, some fifty years later, to complete the romance left unfinished by Guillaume, we find that woman is for him the incarnation of all vices; that love is a wicked thing, the root of all evil; that the art of deceiving women, not of loving them, is worth learning. Nay, the utmost libertinage is sanctioned; there is no such thing as fidelity in love, for it is contrary to the law of nature, which designed *toutes pour touz et touz pour toutes*—all women for all men, and all men for all women. Jean de Meung has absorbed all that the most cynical libertines of antiquity could teach him, and to that he has added his own rancor against woman. It is Ovid's *Art of Love* and *Remedy of Love* revised for mediæval use.

Anything further from the gallantry of the romances of chivalry could hardly be found. And yet this cynical attitude was, as we have attempted to show, but an outgrowth of gallantry run mad; for in the beginning, gallantry, says Montesquieu, "is not love, but it is the delicate, the light, the perpetual pretence of loving."

Chapter VIII

Marie de Brabant and Mahaut d'Artois

VIII

MARIE DE BRABANT AND MAHAUT D'ARTOIS

THE household of the kings of France, so lately under the wise control of Blanche de Castille or the pure influence of the good but weak Marguerite de Provence, was the scene of a court scandal which threatened serious consequences under the son of Saint Louis, that Philippe misnamed "le Hardi." The central figure in this unpleasant episode, Marie de Brabant, is otherwise of so little note that we shall not tell more of her than is necessary to the understanding of the little intrigue of which she was accused.

Isabelle d'Aragon, the first wife of Philippe III., had died under tragic circumstances. She accompanied her husband and Saint Louis on the latter's second crusade, and returning with the body of the saintly king, was thrown from her horse while crossing a stream in Calabria, and died a few days later (January, 1271), giving birth to a child who did not long survive. In 1274, Philippe married Marie de Brabant, sister of Duke Jean de Brabant. The new queen was young, beautiful, and *excellente en sagesse*, increasing each day in favor with the king. The favorite of Philippe at that time was Pierre de la Brosse, who had begun life, so his enemies said, as barber-surgeon to Saint Louis, but who was really of more respectable origin. He had now arrived at such a pitch of fortune as to excite the

envy of the nobles; since there was a clique against him, he was resolved to use every means to secure his power, for the loss of his power, as he well knew, would almost certainly involve the loss of his life.

The queen, Marie, had probably manifested dislike of this favorite and perhaps sympathy with the attempts to overthrow his power. An accident—we do not hesitate to affirm that it was an accident—gave Pierre, now her enemy, a chance to ruin her. In 1276, Prince Louis, Philippe's eldest son by Isabelle, died suddenly, or at least under mysterious circumstances. The days of poisoning were not by any means past, and poisoning was at once suggested to account for the mysterious death. Pierre de la Brosse industriously circulated the rumor that the queen had committed the crime and was prepared to do the like by the three remaining children of Isabelle, in order that the crown might descend to her children. There was, of course, much evil talk in the court, as well as plots and counterplots between the friends of the queen and the friends of the favorite. Philippe was half distracted between his love for Marie and his suspicions of her, and the latter Pierre de la Brosse took pains to keep alive. Finally things came to such a pass that resort was had to the supernatural to satisfy the doubts of the king,—no unusual method of settling difficulties in the days when the belief in things occult was still rife.

At the instance of one of the parties,—it is not absolutely certain which,—Philippe decided to refer the matter of the death of this son to the decision of a learned and devout nun, or Béguine, of Nivelle in Brabant, reputed to have the gift of second sight and mysterious knowledge of things past, present, and to be. It is not impossible that the oracle was tampered with by the enemies of Pierre de la Brosse; but, however that may be, she returned an

answer that set Philippe's heart at rest. He was told to credit no ill against his good and loyal wife. Marie was thereby saved from a most dangerous position; but she could not fail to harbor resentment against the instigator of the attack upon her.

Though, in spite of the intrigues of the queen and the nobles led by her brother, for two years Pierre de la Brosse continued in favor, his fate was preparing; and in the spring of 1278 it overtook him, when letters written by him or forged by his enemies were put into the hands of the king. There was treason in these letters, alleged to have been taken from Pierre's correspondence with Spain. He was arrested and confined in Vincennes, and a court of nobles, dominated by the Dukes of Burgundy and Brabant and the Count of Artois, held a sort of trial and condemned him. The nobles lost no time in disposing of the fallen favorite, whom they conducted at once to the scaffold, while the people of Paris, convinced of the fact that Pierre had been a good minister and that he was being unjustly condemned, indulged in serious riots. There was a popular belief, indeed, voiced by a Parisian chronicler, that Pierre was sacrificed to the hatred of the queen and the nobles: "Against the will of the King, as I believe, was he hanged. . . . He was destroyed more by envy than by guilt." The insinuations against the queen were no doubt one of the main causes of his downfall.

History has never been able to determine whether Marie was really guilty of some attempt upon the life of the children of her husband's first wife. There is a very curious letter written by Pope Nicholas III. to Philippe and Marie that leads one to think that he at least credited the queen with some of the evil charged against her. After begging Philippe not to search deeper into the affair, since Pierre de la Brosse is dead, he fills his letter to Marie with rhetorical

questions of a most disquieting nature: "What could possibly have provoked you to inflict a death so cruel upon an innocent child (Prince Louis) whose tender years could give no just grounds for hate?" If Marie was guiltless, it is hard to believe that the Pope thought her so, when one reads phrases so equivocal. She certainly had everything to gain for her own offspring by the death of Isabelle's children; but there is no proof that she even harbored evil designs, and the whole course of her rather quiet and obscure life gives the lie to the evil insinuations. She was gentle, pious according to the habit of the day, and had received a careful education which left her not without some appreciation of arts and letters, for we find her the patroness of a poet from her native Brabant, Adenet le Roi, called "king of minstrels." The real facts in the case, however, we can never know; and Marie hardly appears again in history, though she lived on in apparent wealth and fair renown until 1321, when her death occurred.

Before Marie de Brabant died many other queens had come and gone in Paris, during the reigns of Philippe le Bel and his sons, Louis le Hutin, and Philippe le Long. But not one of these is of sufficient fame or notoriety to merit extended comment; instead, we may centre our attention upon a typical *grande dame* of the period, a woman who was a direct vassal of the crown and who played no small rôle in the affairs of her own domain, this is the Countess Mahaut d'Artois.

Mahaut, or Matilda, was one of the high nobility, illustrious in her birth and in her relationship to persons of some note in history, being greatniece of Saint Louis, cousin of Philippe le Bel, grandmother of a Duke of Burgundy and of a Count of Flanders, and, greater still, mother of two unhappy Queens of France, the wives of Philippe V. and Charles IV. She lived an active and a

useful life, and is a character not unpleasant to consider. From the days of her impetuous grandfather, Robert d'Artois, brother of Saint Louis, her family had been fond of the battlefield, on which many of them had died. Robert, first Count of Artois, was killed at Mansourah; Mahaut's father, Robert II., had fallen in the great massacre of the French nobility at the battle of Courtrai; and her brother, Philippe, had fallen in another battle with the sturdy burghers of Flanders, in 1298. The death of this brother left Mahaut the heiress of Artois, and she succeeded to her heritage when, as we noted above, her father was slain at Courtrai, in 1302.

At that time Mahaut was already a matron and a great lady in the land; for, in 1285, she had married Otho, Count Palatine of Burgundy. Her husband was far older than she, being then forty-five, while Mahaut had scarcely reached womanhood; moreover, Otho had been a comrade of her father, and was as proud, as chivalrous, as lavish in his expenditures as any prince of his time. This habit of extravagance made Otho an easy victim for the rapacious money-lenders; and when he was in the hands of these Philistines the cautious King Philippe le Bel knew how to help him just enough to keep him a grateful and obedient vassal of the crown. As early as 1291 was born Mahaut's first child, a daughter named Jeanne, who was followed by a second daughter, Blanche (about 1295), and then by two sons, Robert, and John, the latter dying while still in infancy. The ruïnous excesses of Count Otho had brought him to such a pass that, in 1291, Philippe le Bel made a most advantageous bargain with him: the infant daughter Jeanne, it was agreed, was to marry the eldest son of the king and thus bring Burgundy under the power of the crown; but it was stipulated that, in the event of the birth of a son to Otho, Burgundy

should revert to this son and Jeanne should marry the second son of the king. This, in fact, was what happened, for Otho had two sons. Again, in 1295, when the count was in the hands of the usurers, Philippe le Bel paid his debts, and granted him a pension and a continuance of this or part of it to his children, in return for which Burgundy was placed in the king's hands, together with the guardianship of the children until they should reach the age of seventeen.

What the Countess Mahaut thought of these arrangements, so largely affecting the future of her children, we cannot tell, for we have little information in regard to her life previous to the death of her husband. This event occurred in the early part of 1303, when Otho, like so many others of Mahaut's family, was killed in battle with the Flemings; and it cannot be denied that his death was a gain rather than a misfortune for Mahaut and her children. As a widow she enjoyed the right to special protection from the crown, with which the relations of her family and of her husband had been most intimate and fortunate; and as a widow she was free to devote herself to the task of recouping the losses incurred through the bad management of her domains by Otho. As the feudal ruler of Artois and Bourgogne she would have much to occupy her time, even if her affairs had been in the best order and she had been left to manage them in peace; but this was not to be, for she had to contend for her rights during the greater part of the years that remained to her.

Before we enter upon her career as Countess of Artois, let us conclude a part of the more intimate life of Mahaut, a part full of shame and sorrow for the mother. Her son, Robert, was the object of much solicitude on the part of Mahaut, who sought in every way to give him an education not only suited for the high station in life he would

be called upon to occupy, but calculated to make him a useful and a happy man. As early as 1304, when he could have been no more than seven or eight years of age, Mahaut provided him with a separate establishment, or *hôtel,* under the government of two worthy gentlemen, Thibaud de Mauregard and Jean de Vellefaux. There was provided a little comrade for Robert, Guillaume de Vienne, his playmate, who was treated with as much consideration and kindness as was Robert himself. Then there was a retinue of some seven or eight servants, and two knights, old servants of Mahaut's father, to assist in the military training of the young gentlemen; and there was also a certain Henri de Besson, the pedagogue charged with the education of Robert. The child, of course, was not left solely to these attendants by his mother, who passed a considerable part of the time with him. Games and fashionable amusements were not forbidden by the fond mother, and, as early as 1308, we find Robert losing his money in play at the court, and spending his gold on horses and tourneys like other young gentlemen of the day.

In 1314 he was already able to wear knightly panoply of war, and in the following year he accompanied the royal army in an aimless expedition to Flanders, while his mother stayed at home and had prayers recited for the safety of her son. But that son, whom she loved so devotedly, and whom she was doing so much to please and amuse, did not live to manhood, for he died in the early part of September, 1317, before he had received the final dignity of knighthood. From all the Church dignitaries of Artois, from all the great relatives of Mahaut, came letters of condolence upon the death of the heir of Artois, which for two days was publicly proclaimed by servants of the countess through the streets of Paris, in which city

generous alms were distributed to the poor; while pilgrims were despatched at once to Saint-James of Compostella, to Saint-Louis of Marseilles, and to other shrines, to intercede for the soul of the dead. A few weeks later Mahaut ordered a sculptor, Jean Pepin de Huy, to erect a tomb for the *très noble homme monseigneur Robert d'Artois, jadis fiuz (fils) de ladite comtesse.* This tomb, of white stone, bears a recumbent figure of the young count, clothed in armor, with long, flowing hair about the handsome, beardless face; it is now preserved in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, having been moved from the church of the Cordeliers, where it originally rested over the grave of Mahaut's son.

Long before the death of Robert, the Countess Mahaut's daughters had played their brief and disastrous parts in the French court. In January, 1307, in accordance with the treaty agreed to by Count Otho in 1291, the eldest daughter, Jeanne, was married to Philippe de Poitiers, second son of King Philippe le Bel. The next year, Blanche, a great deal younger than Jeanne, but already renowned for her unusual beauty, married Charles le Bel, Count de la Marche, the youngest of the three sons of Philippe le Bel, Louis le Hutin, the eldest, having married Marguerite, sister of Hugues de Bourgogne. After their marriage to the princes of France, we hear little more of Jeanne and Blanche in the accounts of their mother, though both were guests at her mansion rather frequently, and presents of various sorts were exchanged between mother and daughters, until in 1314 came the great catastrophe.

For some time there had been scandalous rumors at the court about the conduct of the three young princesses, and in the spring of 1314 the evil report received such confirmation that the old king, Philippe le Bel, gave the order to arrest them on charges of having been openly and scandalously unfaithful to their marriage vows with two

young knights of their suite. Marguerite and Blanche were confined in rigid imprisonment at the famous Château Gaillard, built by Richard of the Lion Heart. They were stripped of all the glory of fine attire, and their heads were shaved. Meanwhile, their accomplices in adultery, Philippe and Gautier d'Aulnai, two Norman knights, were put to the torture, and confessed that during three years they had sinned many times with the princesses. The right of trial by battle, for which the knights first asked, had been sternly denied them; there was but the rack, and after that a shameful death for those who had dared to bring shame upon the royal family. With the ingenuity of the Middle Ages in devising exquisite torments, the two young men were publicly flayed alive, cruelly mutilated, and tortured as long as life could be kept in their miserable bodies. There were other accomplices in the disgrace of the princesses; these, too, when they were not of rank sufficiently high to protect them, were tortured, sewn up in sacks, and cast into the Seine. An unfortunate Dominican monk, accused of having debauched the princesses by compounding love philtres and otherwise exercising the black art, was delivered over into the hands of the Inquisition; he was never heard of afterward.

The confessions of their lovers left no doubt as to the guilt of Blanche and Marguerite. The former, still but a girl, had been led into her evil ways by Marguerite, and pitifully owned her sin, pleading for forgiveness in accents of such sincere repentance that all who heard her were moved. But her husband was inexorable; and she remained in prison until 1322, when Charles, having become king, obtained a dissolution of the marriage on the ground that Mahaut had been his godmother and that this established a spiritual relationship for which he had forgotten

to ask a dispensation when he married Blanche. Then Charles married Marie de Luxembourg, and his unhappy divorced wife was compelled to retire to a nunnery.

It was said that in her prison of Château Gaillard she had suffered violence from her jailer; it is more charitable to suppose that this is so than to assume, as some do, that she was so depraved in morals as voluntarily to abandon herself to debauchery; and one must always remember that it was to the interest of the court party to represent her in colors as dark as possible. The belief in her guilt, nevertheless, cannot be avoided; and even her mother gives silent proof of her belief in it, for after the disgrace of her daughter, that daughter's name appears no more in the accounts of Mahaut's household. Blanche retired to the convent of Maubuisson, where she took the veil in 1325, and died in the next year. Under "a large white stone, much carved and decorated with roses, without any inscription, and bearing a figure representing a nun," lay the body of the unhappy Blanche, once Queen of France in right.

Her companion in debauchery, Marguerite de Bourgogne, met a fate more suddenly tragic, though surely not more pathetic. Her marriage with Louis le Hutin could have been dissolved, of course, on the score of adultery; but Louis preferred less public methods. Having become king, on the death of his father, not many months after Marguerite's disgrace, he desired to find another wife; so Marguerite was put to death in the Château Gaillard, being smothered, it is said, between two mattresses.

The third of the daughters-in-law of Philippe le Bel, the Countess Jeanne de Poitiers, was more fortunate than her sister and Marguerite. When the three had been arrested she was separated from the other two and sent to Dourdan. Her character seems to have been better formed

than that of Blanche, and she had not indulged in the excesses proved against Blanche and Marguerite. Mahaut was from the first firmly convinced of her innocence, and sent frequent messages of consolation and sympathy to her during her confinement in Dourdan. Although she had been aware of the evil practices of her sister and her sister-in-law, it could hardly be held an unpardonable crime for her to have refrained from talebearing. In one of the rhymed chronicles, which gives a graphic account of this tragedy, Jeanne is represented as confessing her small share in the wrong and pleading for mercy before Philippe le Bel: "Sire, for God's sake hear me! Who is it that accuses me? I say I am a good woman, without guilt, without sin or shame." She demanded an investigation, and the king granted her request. While she was confined a strict inquiry was held into her conduct, and the result was that, at Christmastide, 1314, she was adjudged innocent, and came back to her husband, "whereof there was great joy throughout France." She was to become Queen of France not long afterward, and then to be widowed; but during the rest of her life there was no blot on her good name, and no interruption in the affectionate relations existing between herself and her mother. As Countess of Poitiers, as Queen of France, and as dowager Queen and Duchess of Burgundy, she visited Mahaut frequently, accompanied her in journeys, and exchanged gifts with her.

The scene of the orgies indulged in by Blanche de la Marche and Marguerite de Bourgogne was long pointed out in Paris and became an object of peculiar horror—one of those places of evil association which, without our knowing why, always arouse a feeling of repulsion and of dread. It was in the dark old Tour de Nesle, on the bank of the Seine opposite the Louvre, that, said the Parisian horror-mongers, the wicked queens had held high revel. The

legend was not only enduring, but, like most legends, endowed with the faculty of gathering new matter as the years went by. François Villon, that great repository of the quaint beliefs of the people of the purlieus of the Sorbonne, tells of the great queen "who had Jean Buridan cast in the Seine in a sack" from the high walls of the Tour de Nesle. Brantôme, in his *Dames galantes,* records the same popular story of a queen "who dwelt in the Hôtel de Nesle, at Paris, and lay in wait for passers-by; and those who pleased and suited her best, whatever class of people they might be, she had them summoned and made them come to her by night; and after she had had her pleasure of them she had them cast into the water from the top of the high tower, and had them drowned." Other historians are even more definite in their statements—which, nevertheless, are unfounded,—naming the queen who is said to have been the Parisian Messalina and to have given a tragic end to the celebrated legist, Jean Buridan; she was, they say, Jeanne de Navarre, wife of Philippe le Bel.

Jeanne, who died in 1307, was a violent and savage woman, but there is no proof that she was at all immoral. She it was who manifested such savage virulence against the Flemish women during the revolt of 1302: "When you kill these Flemish boars," she said to the soldiers, "do not spare the sows; them I would have spitted;" and she it was who did her best to ruin the minister Guichard, who had incurred her enmity by saving an unfortunate creditor whom she was resolved to destroy. She pursued Guichard with such relentless fury, indeed, that he had resort to the black art, seeking at first to win back the queen's favor by his enchantments, then seeking to compass her death by the favorite method of constructing a waxen image, representing his enemy, and causing it to melt slowly away, in the belief that she would waste

as the image wasted. But Jeanne did not die of witchcraft, though Guichard was imprisoned and long persecuted as a sorcerer. We have given these few facts about her to show that she was a person of ill repute, which will partly account for the substitution of her name for the names of Marguerite and Blanche in the tales of the Tour de Nesle.

Because of the misfortunes which overtook her daughters, Countess Mahaut was compelled to be very circumspect in her own conduct. She had been an indulgent and affectionate mother to both; but her own political situation was at this time too precarious to admit of her attempting to defend them with a high hand. After the death of her father, in 1302, Mahaut and her husband had been invested with the county of Artois, and she had continued to govern it unmolested after Otho's death until 1307, when we first hear rumors of a claim affecting the validity of her title. Mahaut had inherited the county as being nearest of kin to Robert II., the Salic law not applying under the customs of Artois. At the time there was living a son of Mahaut's brother, Philippe; and this young Robert de Beaumont, calling himself Robert d'Artois, was the person who, instigated by his mother, now attacked Mahaut's title, appealing for judgment to the king and the court of peers. Robert demanded the recognition of his rights to the countship of Artois, or, failing that, to an indemnity of considerable amount. This latter had been already provided for by a convention between his grandfathers at the time of the marriage of Philippe d'Artois and Blanche de Bretagne, and Robert was perfectly justified in demanding its payment. When the cause was tried before Philippe le Bel, October, 1309, he rendered fair judgment, confirming Mahaut in the possession of Artois and granting certain lands and a large sum of money to Robert.

But mediæval politics were very uncertain; what one king did or said might well be reversed by his successor; and so the death of Philippe le Bel (1314) was the signal for a renewed attempt to dispossess Mahaut and her children. At this time there was much disquiet over all the kingdom, and Mahaut had the dreadful shame of her daughter to harass her; it seemed, therefore, a peculiarly opportune time to begin the attack upon her. Robert addressed a most insolent letter to his aunt: *A très haute et très noble dame, Mahaut d'Artoys, comtesse de Bourgogne, Robert d'Artoys, chevalier.*—But we will translate: "Since you have wrongfully denied me my rights to the countship of Artois, at which I have been and still am greatly troubled, and which I neither can nor will longer suffer, therefore I notify you that I shall take counsel to recover mine own as soon as may be." Not content with this formal claim, which he pushed before the king, Robert resorted to most unworthy weapons in his contest with Mahaut, stirring up the vassals and communes of Artois, inciting them to acts of violence against her and her children, and circulating rumors most dangerous in an age when people were but too ready to credit accusations of the sort—that Mahaut had employed sorcery against her son-in-law, Philippe le Long, and had poisoned the King, Louis X.

We have had occasion to mention now and again this subject of witchcraft; it may be permissible, therefore, to give some few details brought out in the investigation, in 1317, of the charges of evil practices brought against Mahaut d'Artois. The belief in witchcraft was almost a cardinal article of faith throughout many centuries, even among the educated classes, and one might say that the cynical author of the second part of the *Roman de la Rose*, Jean de Meung, is almost a unique exception in his scepticism regarding the power of sorcery. Many a

miserable old woman had suffered horrible tortures at the hands of justice or had been hounded to her death by superstitious neighbors who credited her with causing diseases of men and cattle, dearth, drouth, storms, or any other untoward misfortunes; and many a monk, devoting himself to rational study of the phenomena of nature, to chemistry, astronomy, medicine, or any other science, had incurred suspicion of damnable traffic with the devil, like the Guichard mentioned above, and like Gerbert himself, who lived to become Pope. The Church authorized the belief in evil spirits and provided forms of exorcism to rid the land, the cattle, the house, the body, of the demons that possessed them; while the mediæval books of medicine show us that that science relied largely upon charms, peculiar times and seasons, and incantations, for the compounding of the drugs that were to effect cures. The witch and her hellish brews maintained a perfect reign of terror over the ignorant and the superstitious.

Instigated doubtless by Robert d'Artois or his emissaries, a certain Isabelle de Férièves, reputed a witch in her own country of Hesdin, testified that Mahaut d'Artois had come to her and asked her to compound a sort of philtre or potion to restore the love of Count Philippe de Poitiers for her daughter Jeanne, then imprisoned at Dourdan under the charge of adultery. Isabelle required Mahaut to procure for her and deliver to her, in secret, some blood from Jeanne's right arm, which she mingled with three herbs, vervain, liver-wort, and daisy, pronouncing over the mixture a mystic incantation. Placing it then upon a clean new brick, she burned it by means of a fire fed with oak wood, and pounded up the paste so produced into a powder, which was to be administered to Philippe in his food or drink or cast upon his right side. For this Isabelle received a substantial price, seventy

livres parisis, and was given a similar order for a philtre to recover the affections of the Count de la Marche for his wife Blanche. Moreover, she asserted that Mahaut, well pleased with the efficacy of these decoctions, asked for a poison to envenom arrows, which she pretended that she desired to use upon nothing more than the deer of her forests. The enchantress set to work again, with an adder's tail and spine and a toad dried in the open air, which she pounded up into a powder and mingled with wheat flour and incense. The sorceress was painfully lacking in imagination, else we should have had something to rival:

> "Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
> Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
> Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
> Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,
> For a charm of powerful trouble,
> Like a hell-broth boil and bubble."

But perhaps the report of unsympathetic historians and lawyers has been unjust to her, and has toned down the horrors of her "charm of powerful trouble," which she alleged the Countess Mahaut gave to Louis X., thereby procuring his death and the accession of her son-in-law, Philippe V.

The king conducted a serious and searching investigation, to which Mahaut declared herself more than ready to submit, provided that the court were properly constituted and that her cause in the matter of the succession in Artois be in no wise prejudiced. Witnesses on both sides were examined, including the widow of the late King Louis X. and the officers of his household, and on October 9, 1317, a solemn verdict of acquittal resulted for Mahaut. There need be no doubt that the accusations against her had been entirely groundless, merely trumped up in the hope of

prejudicing her cause in the eyes of the court. It was only a few months later that Philippe V., after a careful and impartial reëxamination of the allegations on both sides, gave judgment in parliament confirming the finding of his father and establishing Mahaut's right to Artois, and ordering that "the said parties (Mahaut and Robert) should desist from all hate and all felonious acts, . . . and that the said Robert should love the said Countess as his dear aunt, and the said Countess the said Robert as her dear nephew," which both swore to do.

While Mahaut was forced to contend in the courts for her authority over Artois, the rebellion of the nobles on the death of Philippe le Bel had not been without serious results in Artois, where she had found it no easy task to maintain any sort of hold upon her vassals. Her chief counsellor, and a faithful servitor he proved, was Thierry d'Hireçon, whom the vassals of Artois hated as a parvenu foreigner—he was from the Bourbonnais. In 1314 her vassals began complaining to Mahaut of abuses in the government; but they soon passed from peaceful and legitimate remonstrance to active outrages upon the servants and the property of their countess. In all this Robert d'Artois was no doubt the hidden instigator. One of Mahaut's officers, Cornillot, bailli of Hesdin, who had incurred the enmity of the Sire de Créqui by interfering with his hunting over field and forest without regard for the rights of others, was set upon by a mob of villains who hanged him to a tree; when the weight of his body broke the limb and brought the poor wretch to the ground, they buried him in the earth up to his neck, cut off his head, and carried it as a trophy to the Sire de Créqui. Mahaut despatched her son with a considerable force to arrest two of the rebel vassals in the act of going to war; they were taken to prison, but unwisely released by the

intervention of the king, and on the very steps of the prison proclaimed their intention of going over to Mahaut's enemy, Robert. Some of the nobles came upon the young count and his sister, Jeanne, in a country house, insulted them grossly, and even threw mud in the face of the defenceless Jeanne and her brother, who had with them but three knights. Jeanne fled to Hesdin, where Mahaut was at the time, and on the road her carriage was surrounded by a mob of knights, who terrified her by their insults and their threats. At last both she and Mahaut were forced to abandon Artois till quieter days should come, leaving the officers and armies of the king to restore order, a task not completed until July, 1319.

The rebels committed so many outrages, and the public peace was so frequently disturbed by their quarrels, that the better element was ready to welcome Mahaut as a deliverer when she came back, fortified by the recent decree of the king in her favor. At Arras a sort of triumphal procession was arranged to welcome her, and "she entered seated upon a chariot, preceded by thirteen banners, accompanied by the Constable of France, by Thierry d'Hireçon,—who, like his mistress, had been driven to flight,—and, more wonderful still, by many bold knights who had long sworn to destroy her." The next day the countess gave a splendid banquet, at which were present "the Constable, all the knights, the burgesses and notables (of Arras), and besides many ladies." The towns in particular were glad to have their countess once more in power; indeed, all the towns except Arras had remained faithful to her, resisting the enticing proposals of Robert d'Artois and the rebel nobility, for well the burgesses knew that only a strong hand could protect them and their goods from the rapacity of nobles who were always in want of money and always ready to take the

first that came to hand. To two of the emissaries of the rebels the citizens of Saint-Omer gave answer that their countess "was a good guardian of their law and their privileges, and if she were not they should make complaint to none but the King;" while they told the emissaries of Robert d'Artois, who dared not affirm that the king had decided in favor of their patron, "then we are not makers of any Count of Artois."

Though severe in her administration of justice and strict in the maintenance of order within her dominions, Mahaut appears to have been just, even kind, and hence able to command the respect of her subjects. With the citizens of Arras she exchanges courteous greetings and gifts; cloths, wine, fish, come to her from the townspeople; and she invites to her table the burgesses and their wives. When she is ill, they send to inquire solicitously after her health, and she replies: "Mahaut, Countess d'Artois, etc. . . . to our beloved and faithful *échevin* and twenty-four burgesses of Arras, greeting and love. We are much pleased, and heartily do we thank you for that you sent to inquire concerning our health. . . . Therefore we wish you to know that on the day when this letter was written we were in good bodily health, thanks be to God. . . . Give greeting in our name to all our good subjects, and be assured that as soon as we shall be able we will journey into that part of the country. Our Lord have you in His care. Given at Bracon, the thirteenth day of August." What a quaint and yet dignified and kindly letter is this, showing us at once the great feudal lady and the woman really grateful for kindly sympathy.

Another episode, immediately preceding her triumphant reëntry into Artois, reveals again the feminine nature, and we are rather surprised to find that this energetic, courageous Mahaut can be, at need, such a very woman. The

royal troops had restored order in Artois, and the vassals of Mahaut, leagued against her authority, had been reduced to submission and had consented to a peaceful settlement of their alleged grievances and to the return of their lawful countess. On July 3, 1319, the royal commissioners came to her mansion in Paris to read her the treaty, in the presence of her counsellors. She protested that the treaty violated her privileges, and declared she would not listen to the reading of an agreement in which she could not alter a word. Tears flowed, and the excited lady now would, now would not, listen to the reading; and that, too, when she admitted that she, like the nobles of the league, had sworn to submit their differences to the arbitration of the king, and that she would keep her oath! Summoning her notary to draw up a formal act of protest,—"all that she might say or swear would be said or sworn against her will and her conscience, and in the fear of losing her county of Artois,"—she hurried to Longchamp, into the presence of the king. Philippe assured her that all had been done in good faith to safeguard her rights, and that it was merely for form's sake that he would require her to swear to observe the treaty. Presto! the doubts and the tears disappear: "I swear it!" And the countess went out in apparent peace of mind. But now she was met by two of her relatives, her nephew and her cousin, who pointed out to her that her oath was insufficient, because she had not specified exactly what it was that she swore; an oath so vague might have serious consequences, and so they implored her to return to the presence. More tears, more angry refusals to swear at all, and finally the countess once more yielded and went before the king. The chancellor held out the Bible for her to swear that she would observe the stipulations of the treaty; Mahaut turned toward the king: "Sire, do

you wish me to take this oath?" "I advise you to do so." "Sire, I will swear, provided you guard me against all deception." "So help me God, it shall surely be done." "Then, I swear, as you have said," and once more Mahaut went out.

One can forgive her exasperation at finding that the persistent relatives were still not satisfied; poor woman, she felt that all she possessed and all her children possessed was somehow at stake, and she helplessly ignorant, like too many other women, of the technical points of the law. Again, feeling that her counsellors were probably in the right in protesting against the conditional oath she had taken, Mahaut went into the royal presence. The Sire de Noiers, marshal of France, protested that everyone was acting in good faith by her, and that the king merely wished her to take the oath without equivocation or reservation: "Sire de Noiers, I am here, as you can see, without counsel; some of the king's councillors have so intimidated mine that they dared not appear before you; God alone inspired me to say what I did say; have I not several times sworn as my lord commanded? What is there so amazing in the king's promising to succor me, a widow, in case of deception? Does he not owe this same protection to every widow in his kingdom? What I have sworn should suffice." Another councillor protested that her conditional oath was an insult to the King's councillors; there was crimination and recrimination, till at length the badgered countess, sighing deeply, appealed to Philippe: "Ah! dear Sire, have pity upon me, a poor widow driven from her heritage, and here without counsel! You see how your people besiege me, one barking on my right, another at my left, till I know not what to answer, in the great trouble of my mind. For God's sake, give me time to deliberate upon this matter. . . . I am willing to

take any oath you wish." Then, when the chancellor again held out his Bible and required her to swear fearlessly and without conditions, she broke forth in tears: "Many times have I sworn already! I swear again, I swear, I swear, may evil come upon my body if I swear not truly!" And she rushed out and hurriedly left for Paris, in spite of all remonstrances. It was not till the next day that her advisers succeeded in persuading her to take the oath in proper form, as the king wished it taken.

One may think that this quibbling, this jesuitical swearing with a mental reservation to be bound only so far as seemed good to herself, was unworthy of Mahaut; it was, as a matter of fact, but the poor defence of the weak in an age when trickery was but too common. Mahaut knew that, although the king was her son-in-law, policy might have won him to the side of her nephew, the claimant of her county. Even if Philippe were above a miserable deception of the kind, there was no telling to what tricks the crafty lawyers, perhaps in the pay of Robert d'Artois, might have recourse. She could not conquer chicanery by force, she could not meet it with chicanery, hence her nervousness and her hesitation and suspicion.

When the countess felt herself strong in her own right and sure of proper support from her servants, she was by no means the tearful and vacillating woman whom we have seen in the preceding page or two. The officers of her government in the various bailiwicks of Artois were usually well chosen and reliable. Appointed and paid by the countess and holding office at her pleasure, these baillis, recruited from the ranks of the petty nobility and the bourgeoisie, had every incentive to honesty and faithful service. They were at once administrators, justices, and financial agents, and in the latter capacity had to make reports, at Candlemas, at Ascension, and at All Saints, to

the chief financial officer, the receiver-general, who in turn submitted his accounts to Mahaut. She was not infrequently in dire need of money, for the expenses of her household were always large, and she was burdened by the debts left by Otho, but these she did at last manage to pay.

With the aid of her officers, upon whom she kept a close watch, Mahaut was prompt enough to repress any unruly vassal who went beyond the limits of law. Sometimes force was necessary, as when the Sire d'Oisy overran and ravaged the lands of certain monasteries under Mahaut's protection and slew the peaceful inhabitants. Summoned by the bailli to appear before her court, the sire at first refused to admit the bailli, then did admit him and kept him a prisoner. "Not a stone of his château shall be left standing," declared Mahaut, and she despatched a little army that soon brought the Sire d'Oisy to reason. The punishments inflicted upon recalcitrant vassals were sometimes most severe and sometimes fantastic. The seigneur himself is sometimes put to death when his crimes have been too much for the patience of the countess and her people; or he is expelled and deprived of his fief; or he is heavily fined and ordered to perform a penitential pilgrimage. It is thus that Jean de Gouves is condemned, in 1323, to undertake a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint-Louis of Marseilles, to the tomb of the Apostles in Rome, and to two other Italian shrines; while, to avoid possibility of deception on the part of this pious pilgrim, he is required to bring back a certificate from each of the places visited.

If the punishments inflicted on rebellious vassals were severe, what epithet shall we reserve for the punishments of the criminal code? The rack and the stake are not unheard of during the reign of Mahaut, and these are the milder forms of punishment: counterfeiters boiled in oil,

women guilty of theft or of marital infidelity buried alive, miserable lepers put to the torture,—these are but a few of the ingenious and barbarous punishments of which we find record. But it is to be noted that Mahaut was not wantonly cruel or vindictive; the forms of execution we have mentioned were the established practice of the day, with which no one dreamed of interfering; so far from being heartless, Mahaut reduced the severity of the fines and penalties in some cases and provided for the widows and orphans of some who were sent to the gallows, while she was always endeavoring to restrain the grasping proclivities of her tax-gatherers and holding investigations whenever complaint of injustice reached her ears.

With the minor matters of her household economy we need not deal, since enough has been said of the manner of life of a mediæval lady of rank. Suffice it to say that the *hôtel* of the Countess of Artois was famous for its hospitality and that many of the great ones of the earth sat down to her table. With the fashionable world, the world of the court, Mahaut maintained very close relations, since she was, in one way or another, related to most of the royal family and to the great nobles. Whenever there was a marriage in these circles, there came a rich present from "Madame la Comtesse d'Artois"; sometimes, as in the case of the daughter of her minister, Thierry d'Hireçon, it was practically a whole trousseau: "One scarlet robe, another of deep green cloth, both lined and bordered with fine furs; a mantle and a *cotte* of cloth of gold, the former lined with fur; a robe of Irish woollen; a coverlet of green cloth; a counterpane of *cendal* (meaning usually a heavy and strong stuff, but sometimes silk); four green carpets and fifty ells of linens for sheets." Truly a present of which any bride might be proud, though not so expensive, it appears, as the *nef* (an ornament for

the table, shaped like a ship, and used to hold spices, extra spoons, etc.), and costing one hundred and fifty pounds, given to "our niece, Marie d'Artois, on the occasion of her marriage to Jean de Flandre, comte de Namur." Then, if her sovereign requires her presence at court, Mahaut equips herself and all her suite, gives presents to friends and dependents, and goes up, it may be, to Rheims, as when Philippe le Long is to be crowned—if he can persuade enough of the Peers of France to attend, and where few do attend, so that our Countess Mahaut, a Peer of France, has the privilege of holding the royal crown over the head of her son-in-law. Or mayhap the countess, wishing to keep friends with the great, sends a mess of fine herrings to the powerful favorite, Enguerrand de Marigny, or to her own daughter, Queen Jeanne; or a magnificent jewel of enamelled silver, adorned with rubies and sculptured to represent a little king and queen, and costing one hundred and thirty *livres parisis*, to be delivered to the real king and queen; or a little statuette in enamelled silver, sustaining a shrine, to be presented to the widow of Philippe le Hardi, Marie de Brabant, "de par la comtesse d'Artois et de Bourgogne."

Mahaut spent in this way a considerable amount, besides purchasing for herself and her children various *objets d'art*,—statuettes, paintings, illuminated missals and other books, handsome cups and the like for her table, and jewels and rich clothing in profusion. She was evidently a lady of taste, but also of rather extravagant habits and fond of travelling; for she had carriages or vehicles of some sort in plenty, and travelled on horseback when the state of the roads would not permit the use either of carriage or litter. With her retinue of servants and her carts loaded with baggage and provisions, the countess could yet make the trip from Arras to Paris in three or four days.

But the time was drawing nigh when all her journeyings would be at an end; and as she neared the end of her earthly pilgrimage fresh troubles came to disturb her in the lawful enjoyment of her heritage. After the last decree rendered by Philippe V., Mahaut and her nephew were reconciled and lived on good terms—at least so one would fancy from the exchange of courtesies and hospitality which took place in the years ensuing. But Robert was evidently only biding his time; and now an accident supervened to revive his hopes of better fortune in a new hearing before the royal court. Of course, there was a woman in this case, one who does not play a very creditable part. In 1328, Thierry d'Hireçon had been elected to the episcopal see of Arras, but had died in a few months after his election. After his death, which was a serious loss to Mahaut, the episcopal palace was cleansed, by her orders, of the presence of Thierry's infamous concubine, Jeanne de Divion, who had fled to the arms of the unscrupulous old churchman from the indignant vengeance of an outraged husband. Jeanne de Divion, finding herself driven forth by Mahaut, and forgotten in the will of Thierry, from whose senile infatuation she had hoped great things, resolved to be avenged on Mahaut. She fled from Arras to the service of the ambitious and unscrupulous Jeanne de Valois, sister of Philippe VI., and wife of Robert d'Artois.

Jeanne de Divion was full of vague tales of the valuable papers belonging to the county of Artois which she had seen in the possession of Thierry, and the two women soon saw that some capital could be made for the claims of Robert d'Artois. Robert himself seems to have been reluctant, at first, to have any dealings with the degraded paramour of Thierry d'Hireçon; in place of vague asseverations of what she had seen among the papers of Thierry

he demanded the documents themselves, if there were any. It is probable that at the time there were no documents; but Jeanne de Divion was resourceful and not too nice in regard to matters of conscience. Going to Arras to search among the papers of Thierry, she returned with an alleged treaty negotiated in 1281 between the paternal and maternal grandfathers of Robert, under the terms of which the customs of Artois were set aside and the succession guaranteed to Philippe d'Artois's children, of whom Robert was the representative.

Robert's scruples were laid at rest when this very questionable document, of which nobody had ever heard a word, was put into his hands. He wrote to his brother-in-law, now King of France, to demand a new investigation of the claims to Artois. Meanwhile, the Countess Mahaut set about collecting testimony in rebuttal, aiming especially to show the falsity of the alleged document containing the treaty. She arrested two servants of Jeanne de Divion, who testified, in the presence of several witnesses and of a notary who took down the depositions, that the treaty in question had been written by one Jacques Rondelet, clerk of Arras, at the dictation of Jeanne de Divion, on her recent visit to Arras. Moreover, the countess had the wisdom to get these witnesses to testify that they had not been coerced by her but testified of their own free will and accord. Then she interrogated Jacques Rondelet, who confirmed all that the servants had said, adding that he had written at dictation, and under oath of secrecy, from a document which Jeanne de Divion would not let him see.

The proofs of the forgery, one would think, were sufficient before the cause came to trial; yet, after a statement of the principal allegations on both sides, the king adjourned the hearing to another day. But that day was

not to dawn for Mahaut. On November 23, 1329, the countess was at Poissy, where she dined with the king, going on to the convent of Maubuisson to pass the night, and thence to Paris next day. Here she fell suddenly ill; and her own physician, Thomas le Miesier, was sent for in all haste from Arras. The crude or dangerous remedies of the medicine of the day were powerless to relieve Mahaut; phlebotomy and purgatives probably served but to exhaust her already depleted strength, and the physicians recognized that her end was at hand. Couriers rode in haste from the Hôtel d'Artois in Paris to Queen Jeanne, to the Duke of Burgundy, to the Count of Flanders, on the 26th, and as many as three to the king next day, bearing news of the great countess's peril. Jeanne came to her mother with all speed, but the end had come before she could reach Paris; the good Countess of Artois breathed her last on November 27th.

She who had expended considerable sums in the pomp of funerals, tombs, and effigies for others was buried very simply, at her own request, in the Abbey of Maubuisson, where her grave was marked at first by a plain, flat copper plate, hardly raised above the level of the pavement. In accordance with a custom not unusual in her day, the body was opened and the heart taken to the Franciscan Church in Paris, where it was interred, as she had directed, *juxta sepulturam Roberti carissimi filii mei*—"beside the grave of my very dear son Robert."

Judging from the features of a statue representing Mahaut, which was formerly in a church in Arras and was copied in miniature by an artist of the seventeenth century, the countess was a woman of large and commanding figure, with features rather masculine and strongly marked in their regularity. If one may say so, the sculptor has drawn for us Mahaut's character as well as her features;

she was of the masculine type, strong and energetic rather than lovable. For a woman who would hold her own in those days, the qualities she possessed were, in fact, essential; to rule Artois in the fourteenth century there was need of an amazon rather than of a lovely, fragile, soft-hearted daughter of love. We do not mean that Mahaut was cold, heartless, merely a politician; she was far better both in morals and in kindness of heart than the average lady of her time. She was generous, and yet not a hopeless spendthrift; she was pious and devoted to the glorious memory of her great-uncle Saint Louis,—whom she must have seen when a child,—and yet not a narrow bigot, displaying her religious feeling rather in acts of charity than in acts of pure devotion. No niche awaits her among the heroines of France, for she is a figure neither heroic nor romantic; but she lived her life, the full, healthy, and useful life of a stirring and good lady of the manor in the fourteenth century.

Chapter IX

Jeanne de Montfort

IX

JEANNE DE MONTFORT

WE are now coming to a period in the history of France when woman, though she may not play a part either more prominent or more honorable, will be a centre of universal interest to the subjects of France and of England. Much ink and much fluid of a brighter hue and a more precious quality will be shed in the war between the lawyers and the soldiers of France on the one hand, and those of England on the other; and all to establish the legal status of woman in the eyes of the French law. The great question is: Shall the succession to the crown of France be governed by the laws and customs prevailing in many other countries and in a large part of France itself, whereby women are entitled to inherit equally with men; or shall the ancient law of the Salian Franks apply, the *Loi Salique,* "let no part of the Salian land pass into the hands of a woman"? Since the question has been argued by many a scholiast and many a historian and settled for all time by the arms of Frenchmen defending their right to rule France as seemed best to them, we shall give but small attention to the niceties of the legal argument; but an exposition of the principal facts seems essential.

The argument of the French lawyers was that the Salian land was now represented by domains of the crown; and since the protection of the Salian land necessitated the

guardianship of a man, *a fortiori* must the guarding of the kingdom demand the power of the sword rather than the gentler distaff. Feeling that we owe some apology for clothing in figurative language the simple statement that no woman could wear the crown of France, none more apt can we find than a literal transcription of one of the arguments used by the French lawyers, which suggested the unfortunate distaff. It ran thus: In the Gospel of Saint Matthew (6: 28) one reads: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Now France was the kingdom of the lily, witness the *fleur-de-lis* upon the royal arms; lilies, according to Scripture, are gloriously arrayed, though they cannot spin: *ergo,* the kingdom of the lily should never pass to the distaff.

There were of course arguments of more weight than this, which we have ventured to present merely for the sake of its quaintness, characteristic as it is of the day when tireless pedants were wont to debate in this fashion all things in heaven and on earth. Closer study of the Salic law itself, nevertheless, was not reassuring to the adherents of France; for there they found one of the formulas of Marculf proving that, from the days of the Merovingian kings, the *terre salique,* the allodial land, could be inherited by a woman. This ancient act reads: "To my dear daughter: It is among us a custom ancient but impious that sisters shall not share with their brothers in the heritage of the paternal land. I have considered that you all came to me alike from God, that you should therefore find an equal share of love in me, and, after my death, enjoy equally the heritage of my worldly goods. For these reasons, my sweet daughter, I constitute you by this letter a legitimate and equal co-heir with your brothers in all my estate, in

such sort that you shall share with them not only the acquired property but the allodial land." In the abstract, therefore, as much could be said for as against the claims of a woman to succeed to the crown of France. There could be no question, however, that the long established custom of the kingdom had excluded women, and that this exclusion had operated to the great profit of the kingdom, by keeping it under the stronger rule of men, and more still by preventing it from passing under the control of foreign princes who had married French princesses. As a French constitutional lawyer has remarked: "France is the only one of the great states of Europe where we see the crown remaining for more than eight centuries in the same family. . . . It is to the Salic Law that France owes the long persistence of the Capetian dynasty."

In the first half of the fourteenth century it was a danger of exactly the kind alluded to above that menaced the kingdom of France: a foreign prince claimed the throne as his heritage through his mother. In order to understand the absolute futility of the claim made by Edward III. of England, based on the alleged rights of his mother, Isabelle de France, daughter of Philippe le Bel, it is necessary only to recall that both Isabelle's brothers, Louis le Hutin and Charles le Bel, had left daughters who would have had prior rights if any woman could have inherited. The potent reasons of public polity which would also have absolutely excluded Isabelle and Edward III. have been mentioned above, and are stated in a different way by Froissart. He says that after the death of Charles IV., "the twelve peers and all the barons of France would not give the realm to Isabel the sister (of Charles IV., Louis X., and Philippe V.), who was queen of England, because they said and maintained, and yet do, that the realm of France is so noble that it ought not to go to a woman, and so

consequently not to Isabel, nor to the king of England her eldest son: for they determined the son of the woman to have no right nor succession by his mother, since they declared the mother to have no right: so that by these reasons the twelve peers and barons of France by their common accord did give the realm of France to the lord Philip of Valois, nephew sometime to Philip le Beau king of France." Then, as all the world knows, ensued the great wars between France and England of which Froissart tells with such evident enjoyment of deeds of valor and splendid martial pageants; for, he says, "sith the time of the good Charlemagne, king of France, there never fell so great adventures."

The history of the Hundred Years' War is quite beyond the scope of this volume; but let us be humble camp followers of the great armies that march across Froissart's pages, where perchance we may find some women as amazons, as heroines, or as pitiful victims in this sanguinary and ruinous conflict.

The first woman whom we note in this period, Jeanne de Montfort, was a veritable heroine of the wars, one known to us, through the enthusiastic record of Froissart, as an amazon, but hardly known at all as a woman. The only really interesting part of her career is that occurring during the wars in Brittany, and so we shall begin her history with these events. Marguerite, or Jeanne,—as she was called, perhaps because her husband's name was Jean,—de Montfort, wife of the Count de Montfort, was sister to the Count of Flanders. The countess, whom we shall call Jeanne, was already a matron when events in her husband's native Brittany called for his and her presence there. For generations, Brittany had been ruled by a line of princes who were regarded by the native population with far greater affection and respect than

any king of France could inspire; for they were of an ancient house, associated with all the poetic legends of the land which, poets tell us, had been of the domain of the noble King Arthur. Half of Brittany was rather inclined to sympathy with France, owing to admixture of French blood, while the other half, *Bretagne bretonnante,* clung to the Celtic traditions and to those of England, the land once dominated by their race across the channel; but Bretons of any part of Brittany were Bretons first and always; the allegiance to their dukes was paramount; that to the King of France was quite an afterthought.

When John III., Duke of Brittany and a descendant of that Pierre Mauclerc who caused such serious trouble to Blanche de Castille, died without issue in 1341, he left the succession to his duchy in a very uncertain state. He himself had intended that the ducal crown should go to his niece, Jeanne de Penthièvre, the wife of Charles de Blois, rather than to Jean de Montfort, who was only a half-brother on the mother's side. To the ordinary mind it would seem that Jean de Montfort had at least a reasonable claim; but the Count de Blois was a nephew of Philippe VI., who would therefore throw all his influence against the family of Montfort, long allied in one way or another with England.

Both Montfort and his wife realized that if the succession were left to the adjudication of the French Court of Peers, their claim would receive no consideration. Supported in his bold act by the ambitious and courageous Jeanne, the Count de Montfort, immediately after his half-brother's death, "went incontinent to Nantes, the sovereign city of all Bretayne," where his liberal promises and general fair conduct won him the confidence of the citizens, so that "he was received as their chief lord, as most next of blood to his brother deceased, and so (they) did to him homage

and fealty. Then he and his wife, who had both the hearts of a lion, determined with their counsel to call a court and to keep a solemn feast at Nantes at a day limited, against the which day they sent for all the nobles and counsels of the good towns of Bretayne, to be there to do their homage and fealty to him as to their sovereign lord."

While the new duke and duchess were waiting and hoping for a large accession of Breton knights on the day appointed for doing homage, the duke heard of a large treasure collected by the late duke and stored at Limoges. Leaving Jeanne at Nantes, he took a small body of knights and went to Limoges, where he was favorably received, and secured the treasure, with which he returned to Nantes in time for the appointed day of homage. But the Breton nobles were not at all inclined to flock to his banner and hail him as rightful duke, only one knight, Hervé de Léon, appeared to do homage; and though seven out of nine bishops, and the burgesses of Nantes, Limoges, and some other towns, had declared for Montfort, his position was by no means secure. Nevertheless, he and Jeanne held their little court with what state they could, and determined to use the treasure taken from Limoges to pay for the defence of their duchy, hiring mercenaries, "so that they had a great number afoot and a-horseback, nobles and other of divers countries." With the aid of these forces,—not always required, for some places were quite ready to receive him as their lord,—Montfort took certain towns and fortresses, such as Brest, Rennes, Hennebon, and Vannes.

Charles de Blois, baffled by the promptness and activity of Montfort and appalled at the rapidity with which the latter was making himself actual if not rightful Duke of Brittany, appealed to the King of France, presenting the

claim of his wife, Jeanne de Penthièvre. Montfort, summoned to appear before the French court, went first to England and did homage to Edward III. for Brittany. Returning to France, he obeyed the summons of Philippe, and went to Paris with a splendid retinue, says Froissart, of four hundred horse, leaving his countess to keep watch for him in Brittany. The show of force with which Montfort presented himself before the king did not have the effect of intimidating the latter, if it had been so intended, and Montfort moderated his tone in the interview with Philippe, denying positively that he had sworn fealty to Edward III., and merely urging his rights as nearest of kin to the late Duke of Brittany. Philippe appointed a day for the meeting of the Court of Peers to sit in judgment on the claims of the two heirs, and forbade Montfort to leave Paris during the next fifteen days. Montfort saw, from the reception accorded him by the crafty Philippe, that his case was already judged; "he sat and imagined many doubts"; if he remained in Paris and the verdict of the Peers went against him there was the certainty of arrest and imprisonment until he should have made an accounting for the treasure seized at Limoges and delivered up all the towns he had captured. Therefore he determined upon the course that would at least give him a chance of active resistance if the worst came to the worst; he fled from Paris secretly, and was with his wife in Nantes before the king was aware that the bird had flown. The event justified his distrust, for on September 7, 1341, the Court of Peers adjudged the duchy of Brittany to Jeanne de Penthièvre and Charles de Blois.

By the aid and counsel of his wife Montfort gathered his forces and garrisoned the towns he had taken, while Charles de Blois led a French army against him and soon had him beleaguered in Nantes. The events of this siege

would not concern us, since the Countess Jeanne was not in Nantes, were it not for the peculiar interest attaching to certain episodes and the light they throw upon the remarkable character of Charles de Blois. This man was reputed a saint in his own day, so much so that, under Pope Urban V., an inquiry was held and a favorable report made—but never acted upon—for a formal canonization. We learn some most curious things from *The Life and Miracles of Charles, Duke of Brittany, of the House of France,* in regard to what was in those days considered evidence of saintliness. "He confessed himself morning and evening, and heard mass four or five times daily. . . . Did he meet a priest, down he flung himself from his horse upon his knees in the mud. . . . He put pebbles in his shoes." When he prayed he beat himself in the breast till he turned black in the face. Next his skin he wore a coarse garment of sackcloth, and "he did not change his sackcloth, although full of lice to a wonder; and when his groom of the chambers was about to clean the said sackcloth of them, the lord Charles said: 'Let be; remove not a single louse;' and said they did him no harm, and when they stung him he remembered his God." Truly, at such a price salvation would seem dear to many of us! Yet the history of the early Church is full of saints whose fanaticism assumed this extraordinary type, the predilection for bodily filth. With all this piety, Charles de Blois was unrelentingly cruel and even immoral; for he began the siege of Nantes by cutting off the heads of thirty knightly partisans of Montfort and throwing them over the walls, and when he himself lay dead on the battlefield "a bastard son of his, called Sir Jean de Blois, was slain by his side."

Nantes was treacherously captured and Montfort treacherously seized and imprisoned by the holy Charles de Blois,

who sent his rival to be confined in the tower of the Louvre at Paris. But the war was not over because the count was captured; there was still the countess to deal with, that lady, who, according to the enthusiastic Jean Froissart, "had the courage of a man and the heart of a lion. She was in the city of Rennes when her lord was taken, and howbeit that she had great sorrow at her heart, yet she valiantly recomforted her friends and soldiers, and showed them a little son that she had, called John, and said: 'Ah! sirs, be not cast down because of my lord, whom we have lost: he was but one man. See here my little child, who shall be, by the grace of God, his restorer (avenger) and who shall do well for you. I have riches in abundance, and I will give you thereof and will provide you with such a captain that you shall all be recomforted.' When she had thus comforted her friends and soldiers in Rennes, then she went to all her other fortresses and good towns, and led ever with her John her young son, and did to them as she did at Rennes, and fortified all her garrisons of everything that they wanted, and paid largely and gave freely, whereas she thought it well employed."

Jeanne herself was no mean strategist and captain, and she selected for herself and her young son the strong castle of Hennebon, on the coast of Brittany, where they passed the winter, she keeping up her connection with the various garrisons and making preparations to resist Charles de Blois when he should have reduced Rennes. The siege of this latter place was not ended until May, 1342, when the citizens surrendered the town and did homage to Charles de Blois, who was then left free to undertake the capture of Jeanne de Montfort and her son. "The Earl being in prison, if they might get the Countess and her son it should make an end of all their war." Accordingly,

the French army laid siege to Hennebon, establishing as complete a cordon around it as they could by land, the sea side necessarily remaining open, since they had no fleet to blockade the port.

This siege of Hennebon is one of those romantic episodes of history learned or absorbed almost unconsciously in childhood, which lingers as a precious memory in the hearts of all who love the brave days of old. Even France could but forgive the fair and gallant Countess Jeanne, fighting so valiantly for the heritage of her husband; and whether in French or in English histories, we find a page or two reserved for Jeanne de Montfort, a picture of her, maybe, and all because the genius of Froissart has left us such a vivid narrative of the events at Hennebon. We shall tell the story, familiar to most of our readers, as nearly as possible in the style of Froissart.

"When the countess and her company understood that the Frenchmen were coming to lay siege to the town of Hennebon, then it was commanded to sound the watch-bell alarm, and every man to be armed and draw to their defence." After some preliminary skirmishes, in which the French lost more than the Bretons, Charles's army encamped for the night about Hennebon. Next day the siege began with minor attacks, followed on the third day by a general assault. "The Countess herself ware harness on her body and rode on a great courser from street to street, desiring her people to make good defence, and she caused damosels and other women to tear up the pavements of the streets and carry stones to the battlements to cast upon their enemies, and great pots full of quicklime."

"The Countess de Montfort did here a hardy feat of arms, and one which should not be forgotten. She had mounted a tower to see how her people fought and how the

Frenchmen were ordered (*i. e.*, disposed for the assault) without. She saw how that all the lords and all other people of the host were all gone out of their field to the assault. Then she bethought her of a great feat, and mounted once more her courser, all armed as she was, and caused three hundred men a-horseback to be ready, and went with them to another gate where was no assault. She and her company sallied out, and dashed into the camp of the French lords, and cut down tents and fired huts, the camp being guarded by none but varlets and boys, who ran away. When the lords of France looked behind them and saw their lodgings afire and heard the cry and noise there, they returned to the camp crying 'Treason! treason!' so that all the assault was left.

"When the Countess saw that, she drew together her company, and when she saw that she could not enter again into the town without great damage, she went straight away toward the castle of Brest, which is but three leagues from there. When Sir Louis of Spain, who was marshal of the host, was come to the field, and saw their lodgings burning and the Countess and her company going away, he followed after her with a great force of men at arms. He chased her so near that he slew and hurt divers of them that were behind, evil horsed; but the Countess and the most part of her company rode so well that they came to Brest, where they were received with great joy by the townspeople."

The astonishment and chagrin of the French knights upon hearing that the whole scheme had been conceived and actually carried out by a woman may well be imagined. They moved their scorched finery into other huts made of boughs, and prepared to capture the countess if she should return; but Jeanne was too good a captain to fall into the trap. Her faithful garrison in Hennebon, not knowing

that she had reached Brest safely, were tormented by the misrepresentations of the besiegers, who told them they should never see her more. Five days of anxiety passed in this way, without any tidings of Jeanne. "The Countess did so much at Brest that she got together five hundred men, well armed and well mounted. And then she set out from Brest, and by the sunrising she came along by the one side of the host, and so came to one of the gates of Hennebon, the which was opened for her, and therein she entered and all her company, with great noise of trumpets and cymbals." Too late aware of the return of the valiant lady, the French nevertheless delivered another determined assault upon Hennebon, in which they lost more than did the defenders. Seeing the folly of confining all of his men to the siege of Hennebon, Charles de Blois drew off with part of his army and laid siege to Auray, while Louis of Spain and Hervé de Léon, now on the side of the French, were left in charge of the operations at Hennebon.

The besiegers had several large and powerful catapults, with which they so battered the walls of the town that the citizens "were sore abashed, and began to think of surrender." Among those in high place within Hennebon was the Bishop Guy de Léon, uncle of Hervé de Léon, who now held a parley with his nephew and agreed to use his influence toward bringing about a surrender. "The Countess was suspicious of some evil design the moment the Bishop returned to the castle, and she prayed the lords of Brittany not to play her false and abandon her, for God's sake; for that she was in great hopes that she would have succor from England before three days. Howbeit the Bishop spake so much and showed so many reasons to the lords that they were in a great trouble all that night. The next morning they drew to council again, so

that they were near of accord to have given up the town, and Sir Hervé was come near to the town to have taken possession thereof. Then the Countess looked down along the sea, out at a window in the castle, and began to smile for great joy that she had to see the succors coming, the which she had so long desired. Then she cried out aloud and said twice: 'I see the succors of England coming.' Then they of the town ran to the walls and saw a great number of ships great and small coming towards Hennebon."

We heave a sigh of relief with Jeanne de Montfort; for our sympathies are always with those who fight the good fight. And all the poetry of chivalry is suggested in the scene that followed, a scene in whose enthusiasm and half hysterical joy we can partly sympathize, for we know that the siege of Hennebon will be raised and that the lady and her son will go free. The ships in the offing were, indeed, the long delayed reinforcements which Amaury de Clisson had gone to fetch from England and which contrary winds had kept at sea sixty days. Bishop Guy de Léon, in a rage because the surrender he had arranged was not to take place, at once left the castle, and went over to the enemy: not an irreparable loss, one would fancy, that counsellor who was ready to treat with the countess's enemies behind her back.

The departure of a lukewarm adherent could not mar the joy of the loyal defenders of Hennebon. "Then the Countess dressed up halls and chambers to lodge the lords of England that were coming, with much joy, and did send to meet them with great courtesy. And when they were a-land she came to them with great reverence and feasted them the best she might, and thanked them right humbly, for great had been her need. And all the company, knights and squires and others, she caused to be lodged at their

ease in the castle and in the town, and the next day prepared a sumptuous feast for them."

The leader of the English forces which came to the relief of Hennebon was that chivalrous Sir Walter de Manny, known and loved by all admirers of Froissart and the Black Prince. This bold and doughty knight had no sooner tasted of the Countess Jeanne's good cheer than he began looking about him for some adventure that might profit her and her beleaguered garrison. The huge catapults erected by the French were still doing damage to the town, and one of these Sir Walter determined to put out of action. With the aid of some of the Breton knights a rapid sally was made, and the "engine" was pulled to pieces, there being but a handful of men in immediate proximity to defend it. But when the French knights saw what was happening and hurried to the rescue it behooved the English knights to beat a retreat. Nevertheless, Sir Walter de Manny cried: "Let me never more be loved by my dear lady, if I have not one bout with these fellows." So he and some others rode full tilt at the French knights, and then, says Froissart, with his love of a fight and of the comic, there "were several turned heels over head . . . and many noble deeds were done on both sides," till Sir Walter drew off his men and retired to the shelter of the castle walls. "Then the Countess descended down from the castle with a glad cheer and came and kissed Sir Walter de Manny and his companions, one after another, two or three times, like a valiant lady."

Neither the lady nor Sir Walter shall we blame for this kiss, given with no thought of unfaithfulness to the husband for whom she was fighting; it was sheer mad joy that inspired her, and the little incident is typical of the character of this good lady, so full-blooded, so staunch, so sturdy a warrior.

Temporarily worsted at Hennebon, Charles de Blois retired from before it and went to besiege and capture other places in Brittany. Jeanne de Montfort had not sufficient troops to make head against him in these enterprises, and had to look on from Hennebon while he took Dinan, Vannes, Auray, and other places, in spite of the diversions created by Sir Walter de Manny and the English allies. After the capitulation of Carhaix, Charles de Blois returned to the attack upon Hennebon, where he was joined by his lieutenant, Louis of Spain, disgruntled by a recent defeat at Quimperlé inflicted by Walter de Manny. The siege was again fruitless, and, during a truce agreed upon between the combatants, the countess obtained a chance to enlist more active assistance.

Jeanne hurried over to England to implore more aid from Edward. At that time the great king was unworthily occupied in his pursuit of the Countess of Salisbury, in whose honor tournaments were held and magnificent feasts given in London. In these gayeties the Countess de Montfort must have shared with but a sad heart; for that heart was set upon securing aid to win back her husband's patrimony in Brittany, now all overrun by the adherents of Charles de Blois. At length Edward did grant her plea, and she set sail for Brittany with a force of men at arms under command of Robert d'Artois.

Louis of Spain, with a fleet of Genoese ships, was waiting for the English off the coast of Guernsey, where a great naval battle was fought. As the ships neared each other, the Genoese crossbowmen hailed arrows upon the English, who hastened to grapple. "And when the lords, knights, and squires came near together, there was a sore battle. The countess that day was worth a man; she had the heart of a lion, and in her hand she wielded a sharp glaive, wherewith she fought fiercely." The

English had the better of this hand-to-hand contest, but both sides were glad to draw off in the night. The elements roused to battle, and a great tempest wrought much havoc among the ships. After having some of their stores captured and ships wrecked, the English "took a little haven not far from the city of Vannes, whereof they were right glad."

The first task of the countess and her allies was the capture of Vannes, which was accomplished without serious loss. Leaving Robert d'Artois with a garrison to hold this city, Jeanne and Walter de Manny went to loyal Hennebon, while English forces under the Earls of Pembroke and Salisbury laid siege to Rennes. But Hervé de Léon and Olivier de Clisson, that rough and sturdy knight called "the butcher," recovered Vannes, during the defence of which Robert d'Artois was sorely wounded. He came to Hennebon to recover from his wounds, but grew worse, and finally returned to England, where he died. This ally of the Countess de Montfort was the same Robert d'Artois who had sought to deprive the Countess Mahaut of her heritage. He was a man of most unhappy character, and rested under the cloud of charges of forgery and other malpractices. To conclude briefly the part of his story which connects him with Mahaut d'Artois, we may recall the claim he made upon Artois just before Mahaut's death, based upon documents forged for him by the wicked Jeanne de Divion. When Jeanne was brought up to be interrogated, her whole story broke down—the attempts to employ the black art against the king, which she ascribed to Mahaut, and the documents she had pretended to discover in the archives of Thierry d'Hireçon—all was shown to be but puerile fabrication. It was in vain for her to protest that she had acted in these things at the instigation of the wife of Robert d'Artois; she was

burned as a witch and a forger. Robert, terrified by the unmasking of his complicity in the forgery, did not await his trial, but fled to Flanders and thence to England, while his wife, Jeanne de Valois, although she was the king's sister, was banished to Normandy. It was the utter wreck of the fortunes of the pair. We regret to find the name of Jeanne de Montfort linked with that of this pitiful, disgraced knight, whom people did not hesitate to accuse of having poisoned his aunt, Mahaut d'Artois, and her daughter, Jeanne, both of whom had died suddenly within a few months of each other.

The war was now to assume proportions far greater than had been at first contemplated; it was become a war between the two kingdoms, and in this greater drama we all but lose sight of Jeanne de Montfort. Michelet remarks that, with curious inconsistency, Philippe VI. was upholding in Brittany the right of the female line, while he denied that right in his own kingdom, and Edward III. espoused the right of the male line in Brittany and maintained that of the female in France. The inconsistency mattered not to either monarch; in each case merely a pretext was sought for increasing the dignity of his own crown.

Jean de Montfort, in whose behalf his countess had been conducting the war in Brittany, escaped from his prison in the Louvre in the spring of 1345, and made his way to England. Furnished with an army by Edward, he returned to Brittany, but was repulsed before Quimper, and died at Hennebon, in September, leaving his claims to his young son and their prosecution to his heroic widow. With the aid of the English, Jeanne continued the struggle, and had the usual fortunes of war, now victor, now vanquished, in a strife that came to be known as the war of the three ladies. The three ladies were Jeanne herself, Jeanne de

Clisson, and Jeanne de Penthièvre. Jeanne de Clisson and her boy fled from the French to the Countess of Montfort, after Philippe VI., in 1345, had treacherously seized and executed Olivier de Clisson; Jeanne de Penthièvre was left, like Jeanne de Montfort, to support her own claims, for Charles de Blois, her husband, coming into Brittany and laying siege to the fortress of La Roche-Darien, had been surprised and captured by the Countess de Montfort at the head of her English troops. While he was held prisoner in England, Jeanne de Penthièvre made herself the head of her party, a leader in field and in council not unworthy to rival Jeanne de Montfort.

Fortune favored the cause of the house of Montfort, and Jeanne had the pleasure of seeing her son win first a temporary advantage, then a complete victory over the house of Blois. At the battle of Auray Charles was slain, and the treaty of Guérande, negotiated soon after (1364), finally recognized the young Jean de Montfort as Duke of Brittany, while Jeanne de Penthièvre had to content herself with the county of Penthièvre and the viscounty of Limoges. Brittany was weary of the war which had desolated the land from 1342 to 1364, and the battle of Auray had been the decisive struggle, in which both sides had determined to win or lose all.

Of the private character of Jeanne de Montfort we cannot speak with any degree of assurance, since the information we possess is very slight. Hume has ventured to characterize her as "the most extraordinary woman of the age," which is in some respects true enough. In those qualities admired by chivalry she was unquestionably an extraordinary woman; courageous and personally valiant, with a head to plan daring exploits and a heart to conduct her through the thick of the danger, impulsive and generous, a free-handed ruler, and an

admirer of those deeds of chivalrous daring in others which she was only too ready to share herself. No Eleanor of Guienne have we here, masquerading in tinsel armor at the head of a troop of stage amazons, but a gallant lady charging her foes sword in hand. One cannot read her story without enthusiasm; and yet one would gladly know more of the woman before bestowing unreserved praise upon the countess "who was worth a man in the fight," and "who had the heart of a lion."

With all the brilliance and the heroism of these wars between England and France, the glory is not untarnished; for the very patterns of chivalry were too often guilty of most atrocious cruelties. Charles, the saintly Count of Blois, cutting off the heads of the Breton knights and throwing them over the walls of Nantes; Philippe VI. inviting the Bretons to a tourney, and then seizing and executing them; the Count de Lisle hurling from a catapult, over the walls of Auberoche, the miserable servant who had ventured to bear letters from the garrison through his lines; these, and more than these, are the sort of things one finds even in the pages of Froissart, who was so careful to conceal the unpleasant and to bring into the light of genius the chivalrous episodes in his chronicle of the wars. For the weak and the fallen there is little of pity; a word as some brave knight falls, a word of the sorrow of those dependent upon him, and on we go to fresh fields, fresh knightly exploits and pageants. Though the very spirit of chivalry is in the air, how little thought is given to woman! It is only the rare masculine qualities of a Jeanne de Montfort that can win her grudging notice from Froissart.

When such is the spirit animating the great chronicler of the age, it is rather remarkable that we find even three or four women winning such fame as to be remembered.

The great war will in time bring forth the greatest heroine of France; yet it may be questioned whether Jeanne d'Arc would have received even fair treatment at the hands of Froissart, if the knight-chronicler had lived to see the glory of this wonderful peasant girl illumine all France. We may guess that Jeanne the saint, even Jeanne the valiant warrior (he loved warriors better than saints), would have been for him but Jeanne the peasant, the miserable child of some more miserable Jacques Bonhomme, to whom the courtly chronicler would have referred with contempt, scorn, or brutal hate.

The horrors of war are not allowed on the scene in the chronicles from which we draw most of our information about Jeanne de Montfort; but it is pleasant to find in these same pages at least one recognition of the higher and better rôle of woman, as intercessor for the distressed. We allude, of course, to the famous and beautiful story of Philippa of Hainault saving the citizens of Calais, a story which we shall venture to sketch once more, in order to bring before our readers a famous character and a famous scene in history.

For eight months the English army had lain before Calais, while the king stubbornly persevered in his determination to reduce the town and the garrison as stubbornly determined to resist to the death. Edward had built for his camp a regular town about Calais, and starvation had at last reduced the citizens to the point of submission. Jean de Vienne, the commander of the garrison, parleyed with Edward's representatives, but no terms could be obtained; the absolute surrender of the entire garrison was demanded, with the threat of death for the bravest of them, or Edward would go on with the siege till there should be absolute necessity of yielding. To these terms Jean de Vienne nobly refused to consent. Walter de Manny and

other knights pleaded with the king to be more merciful, if not out of kindness of heart then at least out of policy, for fear of reprisals on the part of the French. The peculiarly harsh and puerile conditions then proposed by Edward are well known: "Sir Walter de Manny, say then to the captain of Calais that the greatest grace that he and his shall find in me is that six of the chief burgesses of the town come out to me bareheaded, barefooted, and barelegged, and in their shirts, with halters about their necks, and with the keys of the town and the castle in their hands. With these six will I deal as pleases me; the rest I will admit to mercy."

Jean de Vienne announced the terms to the citizens, and even he wept that he should have to bring them such cruel terms. "After a little while there rose the most rich burgess of the town, called Eustace de St. Pierre, and said openly: 'Sirs, great and small, great mischief it should be to suffer to die such people as be in this town, by famine or otherwise, when there is a means to save them. . . . As for my part, I have so good trust in our Lord God, that if I die in the quarrel to save the residue, that God would pardon me of all my sins; wherefore to save them I will be the first to put my life in jeopardy.'"

Beside the quiet heroism of this rich merchant of old Calais, what tinsel seems the glory of the best of Froissart's favorite knights! "King Edward may have been the victor, . . . as being the strongest, but you are the hero of the siege of Calais! Your story is sacred, and your name has been blessed for five hundred years. Wherever men speak of patriotism and sacrifice, Eustace de Saint-Pierre shall be beloved and remembered. I prostrate myself before the bare feet which stood before King Edward. What collar of chivalry is to be compared to that glorious order which you wear? Think, . . .

how out of the myriad millions of our race, you, and some few more, stand forth as exemplars of duty and honour." Well does Eustace de Saint-Pierre merit the enthusiastic phrases which we have copied from one who was no historian, but a great man with a great heart—William Makepeace Thackeray! For "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Heroism was contagious in those days as for all time, and the example of Eustace de Saint-Pierre was speedily followed by five of his fellow townsmen. Let us now pass to the heroine of the story, Queen Philippa. When the six burgesses, in their humble state, were led to the feet of the haughty and relentless Edward, all pleas were vain to save them, the king turning away in wrath even from the faithful Walter de Manny and commanding that the hangman be summoned. "Then the Queen, being great with child, kneeled down, and sore weeping said: 'Ah, gentle sir, sith I passed the sea in great peril I have desired nothing of you; therefore now I humbly require you in the honour of the son of the Virgin Mary and for the love of me that ye will take mercy of these six burgesses.' The King beheld the Queen and stood still in a study a space, and then said: 'Ah, dame, I would ye had been as now in some other place; ye make such request to me that I cannot deny you. Wherefore I give them to you, to do your pleasure with them.' Then the Queen caused them to be brought into her chamber, and made the halters to be taken from their necks, and caused them to be new clothed, and gave them their dinner at their leisure; and then she gave each of them six nobles, and made them to be brought out of the host in safeguard and set at their liberty."

A noble picture is this of the clemency of a woman where the prayers of men availed not; and we join Jean

Froissart in honoring his royal patroness and mistress, "the most gentle Queen, most liberal and most courteous that ever was Queen in her days, the which was the fair lady Philippa of Hainault, Queen of England and Ireland." But it was not for her mercifulness alone or even in chief that Froissart admired her; he chiefly praises her because she was a woman warrior almost as determined and successful as Jeanne de Montfort, and had come to Calais fresh from her victories over the Scots, of which Froissart gives a careful and glowing account.

Chapter X

At the Court of the Mad King

X

AT THE COURT OF THE MAD KING

THAT France which had known queens good and bad, from Constance in the tenth to Blanche of Castille in the thirteenth century, was delivered over, toward the close of the fourteenth, to the hands of one of the worst women in her history. The woes of France under the rule of the mad King Charles VI. would have been enough to bear; but the Court of France was led in a veritable saturnalia by the licentious Queen Isabeau de Bavière. Once more, in Isabeau, we find a woman whose life-story cannot be told without at the same time telling much of the history of France; but it is not because the queen does anything good that we must tell of the government of the kingdom during her ascendancy; she does nothing but indulge her vulgar tastes for pleasure and debauchery, to satisfy which she would pawn France itself.

In 1380, died the wise though unlovely Charles V., leaving the kingdom temporarily free from the English and in just that nice state of balance between recuperation and ruin when a little thing would suffice to turn the scale either way. His son and heir was a boy of twelve, already madly fond of pleasure, already filling his weak head with fantastic tales of chivalry and romantic devotion to such sturdy warriors as Du Guesclin, whom he could never hope to rival. His reign begins in a dream—a dream of

his meeting a fantastic flying hart, which he took for his emblem. The dream goes on, in mad festivities encouraged by Philippe le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy, who had chief charge of the boy. This Philippe—that same brave son of King John whom we see at Poitiers fighting by his father's side—was a great man, though not lovable; he was too acute a politician to be altogether admirable. In one of the grand shows arranged for the boy king on the occasion of the double marriage of the son and the daughter of Philippe de Bourgogne to the daughter and the son of Duke Alberic of Bavaria, the Duchess of Brabant, whom Froissart calls a woman "full of good counsel," suggested to the king's uncles that it would be well to find a wife for the young king in the same powerful family now allied to the house of Burgundy. Nothing could have better suited the plans of Philippe de Bourgogne, who accordingly sent portrait painters to reproduce the charms of the respective candidates for the hand of the king, and from the portraits selected Isabeau de Bavière, daughter of Etienne II. and a princess of the great Italian family of Visconti.

The young Isabeau, whose portrait showed her to be the most beautiful of the princesses to be chosen from, was brought into Brabant by her uncle, under pretext of a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint John of Amiens, while the Duke of Burgundy at the same time found an excuse for conducting Charles to Amiens, without giving him the slightest hint of the purpose of the journey. Isabeau was presented to the king by the Duchesses of Brabant and Bourgogne, and kneeled low before him, lifting up her sweet girlish face to him in lieu of speaking in a tongue as yet unknown to her. Then Charles took her by the hand, raised her and looked at her pensively; "and in this look the sweet thought of love did enter into his heart."

After the ladies had withdrawn from the royal presence, the Sire de la Rivière, an old minister of Charles V., asked the king: "Sire, what think you of this young lady? shall she remain with us?" "By my faith, yes," replied Charles, "we wish no other, for she pleases us." There was no tarrying for elaborate ceremonies, fond as the king was of them; Charles insisted on an immediate wedding. He and the young German princess were married on July 17, 1385, four days after this first interview. The bride was but fourteen, and the groom not quite seventeen; it was one of those infamous child marriages of which the history of Europe is too full.

Isabeau de Bavière was already of a slothful habit, to be roused only by her love of amusement, to purchase which neither she nor her young husband would spare anything. Luxury and wild extravagance in dress, in entertainments, even in funerals, was characteristic of the age; the whole kingdom gave itself up to extravagance and debauchery; existence was one mad revel, with no thought of who should pay the piper; all must dance and caper as if bitten by the tarantula. The very costumes are wild: "Here (we see) men-women finically tricked out, and effeminately trailing on the ground robes twelve ells long; there, others, whose figures are distinctly defined by their short Bohemian jackets and tight pantaloons, though with sleeves floating down to the ground; here, men-beasts, embroidered all over with animals of every kind; there, men-music, pricked all over with notes, from which one could sing before or behind; while others placarded themselves with a scrawl of signs and letters, which, no doubt, said nothing good. . . . Rational beings did not hesitate to disguise themselves in the satanic, bestial shapes which grin down upon us from the eaves of churches. Women wore horns on their

heads, men on their feet—the peaks of their shoes were twisted up into horns, griffins, serpents' tails. The women, above all, would have made our spirits (of the age of Saint Louis) tremble; with their bosoms exposed, they haughtily paraded high above the heads of the men their gigantic *hennin* (the peaked and horned headdress) with its scaffolding of horns, requiring them to turn sideways and stoop as often as they went in or out of a room."

With all this outlandish fashion of dress the young queen was in perfect accord; and the life of the court was one succession of brilliant entertainments, wicked in their sensuality no less than in their waste of the revenues of a kingdom already impoverished by long wars. During the early years of her presence—we cannot call it her rule—in France, Isabeau took no part in politics; neither did her husband, for that matter, since he left the government in the hands of his uncles, chief of whom was Philippe de Bourgogne. We shall therefore have little to record at first beyond some of the more noteworthy of the doings at the court.

The first of these, and one of the most scandalous, occurred in May, 1388; and the occasion which it was intended to celebrate merits some attention from those who would appreciate the utter incapacity of Charles VI. even at this period. To understand the circumstances we must go back to the time when Charles V. lay dying, and his brother, Louis, Duke of Anjou, waited in an adjoining room till the breath should be out of the king's body. When the king was really dead, out came Louis to seize upon the plate and other movables of value. Hearing that Charles had concealed a considerable treasure in the walls of his palace at Melun, and being unable to discover the hiding place, this affectionate brother sent for the treasurer of the late king, and uttered the grim threat: "You will

find that money for me, or off goes your head." The executioner was there with his ax—the treasure was found; and Louis carried it off to squander it in prosecuting his claims to the throne of Naples. Now he was dead, and his two sons were about to leave France to continue the fight for Naples. So far from remembering with resentment the enormous sums formerly stolen from him by this very family, Charles VI. must needs squander more in a splendid show to celebrate the knighting of the princes of Anjou.

That ceremony in which the young soldier of God swore to defend the right, with all the solemn and impressive ritual that the Church could devise to sanctify and dignify his act, was to be turned into a vile debauch. In the ancient abbey of Saint-Denis, beside the tombs of the great dead who had glorified France, were lodged "the Queen and a bevy of illustrious ladies." Monastery or no monastery, the monks must harbor these fair guests, whom all the rules of their order would have rigidly excluded. Says the chronicle of a monk of Saint-Denis: "To gaze on their exceeding beauty you would have said it was a meeting of the heathen goddesses." And so they were, heathen goddesses, with a lawless Venus at their head. But the festival, be it remembered, was a religious one; we go "to hear mass every morning." The religious services over, the day was given up to magnificent tourneys and rich banquets, and the nights to balls, masked balls, "to hide blushes." For three days and three nights was this revel maintained, the mad Bacchanals scrupling not to defile even the most sacred places by their orgies, which the presence of the king and queen rather encouraged than checked. It was the queen herself, indeed, who loved all this. One does not wonder that people began to whisper that she had already shown more than

decorous affection for her brother-in-law, the brilliant Louis d'Orléans; in the *pervigilium Veneris*, the "wake of Venus," as they called the balls at Saint-Denis, who could say what might have happened?

The king attained his majority; in a sudden fit of impatience, he threw off the control of his uncles, till now the rulers of France, and set up his own government. The royal princes had not been good governors; each one was too intent upon his own interests to consider those of France; and accordingly France hated them, and hoped for better things from the young king and his sober government of humble counsellors. But Charles needed excitement; in lieu of war there were fêtes, upon which he squandered money till the people groaned and the councillors trembled. Any excuse was sufficient for holding a fête. Of a sudden, Charles and Isabeau remembered that the queen had never been crowned and had never made a royal entry into Paris. The city was ordered to make unexampled preparations to receive Isabeau as queen; she had been living in Paris a good part of the time during the four years since her marriage, but that did not do away with the necessity for a formal introduction to the capital of her dominions.

With his usual love of the spectacular, Froissart gives us an account, covering many pages, of the reception of Isabeau. The Parisians dressed themselves in gay costumes of scarlet, and green, and gold, each vying with his neighbor and rivalling, as far as he dared, the gorgeousness of the courtiers and nobles. The fountains ran wine and milk, the balconies and windows were festooned with flowers and crowded with eager spectators, while musicians played before the doors of many houses and miracle plays were given on the street corners. On August 22d, the young queen, hailed at every step by the acclamations

of the throngs in the streets, and accompanied by a crowd of noble ladies borne in sumptuous litters, passed from Saint-Denis to Paris. At the Porte Saint-Denis there was a canopy representing "heaven, made full of stars, and within it young children apparelled like angels," and an "image of Our Lady herself," holding the infant Saviour. Two of the angels, let down from heaven by ropes, placed a golden crown upon Isabeau's head, singing: "Sweet lady amid the *fleur-de-lis*, are you not from heaven?"

"Then when the Queen and the ladies were passed by," having greatly admired this "high heaven richly apparelled with the arms of France, the device of the king," they proceeded along the street till they came to a place where was a fountain, "which was covered over with a cloth of fine azure, painted full of flower-de-luces of gold. . . . And out of this fountain there issued in great streams spiced drinks and claret, and about this fountain there were young maidens richly apparelled, with rich chaplets on their heads, singing melodiously: great pleasure it was to hear them. And they held in their hands cups and goblets of gold, offering and giving to drink all such as passed by; and the Queen rested there and regaled herself and regarded them, having great pleasure in that device, and so did all other ladies and damosels that saw it."

Passing onward to where stood the Church of Saint James, "all the street of Saint-Denis was covered over with cloths of silk and camlet, such plenty as though such cloths should cost nothing. And I, Sir John Froissart, author of this history, was present and saw all this and had great wonder where such number of cloths of silk were gotten; there was as great plenty as though they had been in Alexandria or Damascus; and all the houses on both sides of the great street of Saint-Denis were

hanged with cloths of Arras of divers histories, the which was pleasure to behold."

At the "bridge of Paris," hard by Notre-Dame, fresh wonders awaited the queen. A master tumbler, from Genoa, "had tied a cord on the highest house of the bridge of Saint-Michael over all the houses, and the other end was tied on the highest tower in Our Lady's church. And as the Queen passed by, and was in the street called Our Lady's street, because it was late, this said master with two burning candles in his hands issued out of a little stage that he had made on the height of Our Lady's tower, and singing he went upon the cord all along the great street, so that all saw him and had marvel how it might be." This tumbler, dressed as an angel, gave another crown to Isabeau, and then mounting skyward disappeared through a slit in the canopy over the bridge, as if he were returning to heaven.

In the great Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Isabeau was crowned, saying, says Froissart,—not without an equivocation of which he himself was doubtless quite unconscious,—"what prayers she pleased." But the festivities were not over; we have omitted many a detail given by Froissart—plays and dumb shows presenting indiscriminately the sacred histories of Scripture and the legends of French heroes, castles full of mock monsters, representations of the entire heavenly hierarchy and of the dream which had suggested to Charles the emblem of the flying hart. With gay balls at night and jousts and miracle plays by day, the celebration was continued for several days. The merchants of Paris presented to the queen and to Valentine Visconti, the new Duchess of Orléans, most costly jewels, rich sets of plate, in gold and silver, cups, and salvers, and dishes of gold, "whereat everyone marvelled greatly," and the royal pair were greatly pleased.

Who was to pay for all the display in this entry of the queen? The citizens of Paris had fondly hoped that, what with their show of loyal joy and their presents,—aggregating some sixty thousand crowns in gold,—the king would be pleased to remit certain oppressive taxes. On the contrary, it was the citizens of Paris who were compelled to pay for all this fine foolery. Charles departed from Paris a few days after the conclusion of his fête, leaving behind him an increased tax and an ordinance prohibiting, under penalty of death, the use of certain silver coins of small value; this latter restriction, which was intended to favor the circulation of his new and debased coinage, inflicted peculiar hardships upon the poor. Thus, Isabeau was already inflicting much misery upon the poor of that capital which had lavished so much upon her; and before we bestow our commiseration upon the miserable king in after days, it is well to remember the miseries of his subjects.

Life had been as yet but a dream for Charles and his queen; though France was rapidly going to ruin under their extravagant and heedless rule, could they not chase away care in revels surpassing any that France had yet seen? But the dream was soon to become a nightmare, the hideous nightmare of insanity, for this heedless monarch.

It was not until three years after the coronation of Isabeau that her unfortunate husband had the first attack of what was, unmistakably, insanity, though to any reasonable creature the behavior of the whole court would have seemed mad enough from the beginning. One of those acts of lawless private vengeance which were so soon to become dreadfully familiar in France first excited the king almost to the point of frenzy. A certain Pierre de Craon, a noble who had already distinguished himself by robbing

the late Duke of Anjou, was driven from Paris by the Duke of Orléans, to whose wife he had imprudently revealed some of the infidelities of her too licentious husband. He fled to Jean de Montfort, who persuaded him that the person chiefly responsible for his disgrace was the renowned Olivier de Clisson, Constable of France. Secretly returning to Paris, Pierre de Craon lay in wait for the constable one night and fell upon him with a band of bravoes. The brave De Clisson was seriously wounded, and the villains fled, thinking him slain. Charles, who favored De Clisson, was furious at the outrage, and breathed vengeance against Craon. As Jean de Montfort constituted himself the defender of this wretch, and refused to deliver him up to justice, the lands belonging to Craon were devastated, his wife and children were driven forth, and war was declared upon Brittany.

The king had always had a passionate love for the more theatrical side of war, and, as soon as the constable was able to ride, the king and his forces marched upon Brittany. We may pass over the earlier part of his campaign, taken up in aimless marches and as aimless parleying. On August 5, 1392, during a spell of intensely hot weather, Charles marched out of Mans. He had been suffering from a fever, was much weakened, and had for days been greatly harassed by the heat and the baffling of his delayed vengeance; he was moody, and "his spirits sore troubled and travailed," when, as he rode through the forest of Mans, there suddenly rushed to his horse's head a wild figure, half clothed, and manifestly mad. Seizing the king's bridle, the apparition exclaimed, with that strange earnestness so often noticeable in those whose reason is unbalanced: "Sir King, ride no further forward, for thou art betrayed." The servants hastily drove away the poor madman, and sought to restore the king's peace of mind,

more seriously disturbed than ever by a happening that might well have startled even a person in strong health. On rode the cavalcade, out over the open plains, where a blazing sun beat full upon the king's head, protected only by a thin cap. Suddenly Charles started, checked his horse, drew his sword, and charged upon the pages who rode beside him, crying, as if in the heat of battle: "On, on! down with these traitors!" Madly pursuing the pages, he put to flight even the Duke of Orléans, and was not overpowered and disarmed until he and his horse were quite exhausted.

He recognized none of those about him, and only physical weakness prevented him from becoming again a frantic lunatic. The poor weak brain, over-excited and worn-out by the long years of debauchery, was hopelessly overthrown; though sane at times, and even for considerable periods, Charles VI. was evermore incapable of ruling, being a mere helpless and unhappy tool in the hands of the heartless people who could win sufficient power to rule what was left of France.

The queen was no Blanche de Castille, able to rule a kingdom, and the king's uncle, Philippe de Bourgogne, was at first the real power in France. He was opposed by Isabeau de Bavière and her paramour and brother-in-law, Louis d'Orléans, brother of the king; and the history of the next few years is largely a record of shameless intrigues between these people to obtain control of the mad king, in whose name many an odious thing was done. The regency should, by rights, have devolved upon the king's eldest brother, Louis d'Orléans, who was twenty-one years of age at the time of Charles's madness; but the Dukes of Burgundy and Berri set him aside for "his too great youth." There might have been found some precedent for recognizing Isabeau as regent; but there is

no evidence that she ever made any serious efforts to establish her claim; for she was content with that which the Duke of Burgundy was quite willing to allow her, viz., the squandering of money—not his money—in her pleasures. Isabeau was nominally associated in the council that exercised the powers of regency, but she was really under the control of the Duchess of Burgundy, whom the chroniclers call "a haughty and cruel woman."

With such care as the doctors of the period were likely to give him, there was not much hope of the permanent restoration of the king's reason. One learned physician, however, did have the correct idea as to the cause of Charles's malady and prescribed a moderate diet and a quiet life for him. Under this wise treatment Charles soon recovered as much reason as he had ever had; but the regimen imposed by the physician's orders was as distasteful to the king as it was to Isabeau. The queen, under pretext of furnishing diversions for him, began again the wild life of debauchery which had been the prime cause of Charles's insanity. It was at one of these festivals that occurred the famous "dance of savages" that so nearly deprived France of her mad king.

The chronicler of Saint-Denis says that "it was an evil custom of the time in many parts of France to indulge unreproved in all sorts of indecent follies at the marriage of a widow, and to assume with their extravagant masks and disguises the liberty of making all sorts of obscene remarks to the bride and bridegroom." It was at a sort of charivari held one night (January 29, 1393) in celebration of the marriage of one of Isabeau's German waiting women, a widow, that Hugues de Guisay, one of those panders to the follies of the rich and extravagant who plan their "amusements" for them, undertook to divert the mad king, the queen, and the whole court. He devised

"six coats made of linen cloth covered with pitch and thereon flax like hair." Charles put on one of these, and he and his five satyr-like companions, much delighted with their resemblance to things of horrid form, pranced in among the other revellers. The five were linked together by a chain, the king, fortunately, being loose and preceding them. As the wretched Charles, in his disgraceful costume, was trying to fulfil the part of a satyr indeed by teasing and exchanging coarse jests with the young Duchess of Berri, Louis d'Orléans came into the room. Wishing to discover who it was so disguised—we refuse to credit the account which says he acted in mere heedless desire to see what would happen—he held a torch too near one of the tow-clad gallants. In an instant the whole five unhappy victims of folly were in a blaze. "Save the King! save the King!" cried one of them as he burned. Fortunately the Duchess of Berri, guessing that it was the king who stood by her, covered him with her cloak and prevented his costume from catching fire. Four of the others, whom not a soul in this gay assemblage seems to have made serious attempts to rescue, were burned to death, one escaping by jumping into a large tub of water in the pantry. Among those who died was the wanton deviser of this foolish and dangerous amusement; and as his body was borne to the tomb through the streets of Paris the people cursed him and called out after him, as he had been wont to speak to the poor when it pleased him to amuse himself with them: "Bark, dog!"

Wonderful to relate, this scene of horror at the dance of savages does not appear to have occasioned an immediate relapse on the part of the king. Isabeau, who had manifested extreme terror and sympathy at the moment of her husband's peril, joined him in making virtuous resolutions

to lead a more regular and sober life. But the love of pleasure was too firmly rooted; there were renewed debauches, and Charles became more violently mad than before, knowing neither his wife nor his children, and even denying his own identity. And so it continued throughout his life: following the regimen of his doctors, Charles would have a lucid interval; then he chased the doctors from the palace and went back to debauchery—and to madness. Astrologers were sent for to enlist the sidereal powers in his behalf; one astrologer brought a book which he affirmed the Lord had sent to Adam by the hand of an angel; what good it had done to Adam appeareth not, but it certainly did not relieve the king. Then there were two Austin friars (!) who made a draught of powdered pearls and enlisted all the forces of sorcery in the king's behalf; but the king did not recover, and the friars were handed over to the Inquisition, condemned, and decapitated.

Meanwhile any affection that Isabeau may have felt for her husband had passed away. She had found the Duke of Burgundy at last unendurably parsimonious; Louis d'Orléans was far more liberal with the money of the kingdom; besides, he was a handsome rake, whom all the women loved; it was inevitable that Isabeau should ally herself with the man who was willing not only to share her wanton pleasures but to squeeze out of the people the money required for them. The people, particularly the people of Paris, hated the Duke of Orléans because he was always imposing more taxes, and loved the Duke of Burgundy because he was politic enough to pretend to reduce taxes. It is therefore not surprising that we have so many accounts of the outrageous conduct of Isabeau de Bavière and Louis d'Orléans; for if the people are long-suffering, they yet do not forget.

In order to meet some part of the expenses incurred by the prodigality of the court, Louis d'Orléans and the queen, in 1405, imposed a new tax. The prisons were soon crowded with poor wretches who could not pay the impost even by selling all their belongings, to the very straw of their beds. While the queen amused herself the people cursed. Not knowing what could become of the great sums raised and squandered by the worthless pair, the people said that Isabeau sent cartloads of gold into Bavaria and that Louis wasted it in magnificent structures on his domain at Couci and at Pierrefonds.

The wild accusations of a maddened people, however, were not without excuse. This miserable wanton who was Queen of France left her husband, the poor, good-natured madman, and her children to the care of servants whose wages, in the midst of all this waste of the public money, she forgot to pay. The servants neglected both children and husband; the King of France was allowed to remain in filth and rags, covered with vermin that made repulsive sores upon him, while the little dauphin was but a half starved ragamuffin. One of the physicians discovered in what state Charles was: he had refused to bathe or to change his clothes for five months, and there was danger of his dying from sheer filth. Disguising some of his attendants in fearful costumes, the physician sent them into the mad king's den, where they terrified him into passivity and managed to bathe him, dress his sores, and change his clothes before the fit of terror passed away. When Charles next had a lucid interval he learned of the neglect of Isabeau, thanked those who had been more tender than his wife, and gave one lady, who had tried to care for the dauphin, a goblet of gold.

The indignation of the people was great; all classes united in abhorrence of this shameless wife and mother.

An Austin friar, bolder than the rest, preached a sermon before Isabeau and openly reproved her wantonness: "At your court reigns dame Venus, and her waiting maids are Lechery and Gormandise." The queen and her idle and vicious courtiers wished him punished for his effrontery; but Charles, hearing what he had said, declared that he liked such sermons, sent for the preacher, listened with interest and attention to his recital of the woes of the kingdom, projected reforms—and went mad again.

While the fit of reform was on, Louis d'Orléans, terrified by a storm that had overtaken him and Isabeau in one of their pleasure-jaunts, vowed to repent and pay his debts. At these glad tidings over eight hundred creditors assembled; but the clouds rolled away, and with them went Louis's desire to be honest. He laughed at the creditors and gave secret orders to debase the coinage.

The poor king was just sane enough to realize that things were going wrong; he appealed for help to the Duke of Burgundy. The vigorous and pitiless Jean Sans Peur, who had succeeded Philippe le Hardi in Burgundy, came down upon Paris, and Isabeau fled with Orléans to Melun, abandoning Charles, but planning to carry off next day the royal children and those of the Duke of Burgundy. Jean de Bourgogne, however, overtook the children and brought them back to Paris, where he now (August, 1405) established himself in the Louvre.

So outrageous had been the spoliation under Isabeau and Louis that the Parisians welcomed Jean as a deliverer. The queen, under cover of a pretended right to appropriate goods for royal uses, had systematically not only taken the necessaries of life, provisions and the like, but had seized merchandise, jewels, money stored away by the owners, and furniture, plundering even the hospitals, and storing these stolen goods with the intention of selling

them at auction. Greed was her predominating trait, and so we are not surprised to find her hatred of Jean Sans Peur increasing to the point of virulence when she was deprived of the opportunity of robbing unmolested. Unfortunately for her, Orléans was not a man of ability or energy sufficient to cope successfully with Jean de Bourgogne, and the struggle between the two dukes merely exhausted the resources of Orléans without seriously impairing those of his opponent. Isabeau, moreover, was not bloodthirsty; both her indolence and her interest impelled her to favor the peace between the two dukes which was brought about in the closing months of 1407.

Louis was ill; in mere kindness his cousin of Burgundy visited him, and a reconciliation was effected. As soon as Louis was recovered from his indisposition the two, accompanied by the old Duke de Berri, who was anxious to promote peace, heard mass and took communion together, swearing fraternal love for each other. This was on Sunday, November 27, 1407. On the next Wednesday evening Louis d'Orléans went as usual to sup with Isabeau at the Hôtel Barbette, and was in particularly high spirits, attempting to divert the queen, who had been much distressed at the birth of a stillborn child, a love child, as people said. About eight o'clock in the evening, a message, apparently from the king, summoned Louis, and as he went in response to the summons, accompanied by but a few pages and servants, he was set upon and hacked to pieces in the streets of Paris by a gang of ruffians under one Raoul d'Octonville.

The assassins made good their escape before people knew what had happened. When the death of the king's brother was discovered, great was the consternation; for all knew that such a crime had not been committed by an obscure scoundrel, and the question was asked, what

great man had hired the assassins? In a few days Jean de Bourgogne, in a mood between terror and impudent bravado, confessed that he was guilty of the foul murder of the man to whom he had so recently sworn amity in the sight of God. Fearing that even his rank could not sufficiently shield him from punishment for this shedding of the blood royal, Jean fled from Paris to his own dominions.

The dead man had been neither a good brother nor a good prince; with all of those facile graces which might have made him lovable to all men and did make him fascinating to most women he had combined no sterling qualities. He was not cruel; that is the only relatively good trait—and even that but negative—that we can set over against his reckless frivolity and licentiousness, his shameless infidelity and disregard of oaths and the most sacred obligations. He was not mourned in Paris, which was shocked but not grieved at his death; he was not sincerely mourned by the infamous queen whom he had led away from her duty to her pitiful, insane husband; but he was mourned by the woman whom he had most deeply wronged—his wife.

This wife was the lovely Italian, Valentine Visconti, daughter of the Duke of Milan, who had married Louis in 1389 and was a sharer in the splendors of the gorgeous entry of Isabeau de Bavière into Paris. From the first she had just cause of complaint—and yet never complained—of the infidelity of a husband whom she loved with her whole heart, but whose love she could not retain. Froissart, who was no friend of hers, tells us a most curious and extraordinary story of one of Valentine's rivals, whom Louis had preferred to his wife as early as 1392. It appears that Louis d'Orléans had rashly confided the details of an amour to that Pierre de Craon

whom we have mentioned before, and this knight revealed them to Valentine. The young duchess sent at once for the lady to whom Louis was devoting himself: "Wilt thou do me wrong with my lord, my husband?" The woman was abashed, and in her confusion confessed her guilt. Then said Valentine: "Thus it is: I am informed that my lord loveth you, and you him, and the matter is so far gone between you that in such a place and at such a time he promised you a thousand crowns of gold to be his paramour; howbeit, you did refuse it as then, wherein you did wisely, and therefore I pardon you; but I charge you on your life that you commune nor talk no more with him, but suffer him to pass and hearken no more to his commanding." From the treatment he received at the next meeting with his lady-love, Louis discovered that something was amiss, and she finally told him of the interview with Valentine. Louis then went home to his wife, "and showed her more token of love than ever he did before," finally wheedling her into telling him who had been the talebearer. The sequel we know: how Craon was driven from court, and returned to attempt the assassination of De Clisson.

But if her husband did not love her, the king manifested a real and innocent affection for Valentine, his "dear sister," remembering her and asking for her when, in his madness, he knew no other. Yet even out of this there was to come evil for Valentine; for the Duchess of Burgundy, fearing the growth of the Orléans influence over the king, spread evil reports about the innocent relations between Charles and Valentine. Adding to these insinuations an accusation far more dangerous than that of adultery would have been in such a court, the Burgundians asserted that the king's insanity was produced and continued by the power of witchcraft; and this accusation,

fastened upon Valentine, obtained such credit that her husband had to remove her from court to a sort of exile in his own dominions. We find even worse accusations credited by the unsympathetic Froissart, who reports that she had unwittingly poisoned her own child in an attempt to poison the dauphin, for "this lady was of high mind, envious and covetous of the delights and state of this world. Gladly she would have seen the Duke her husband attain to the crown of France, she had not cared how."

Through good report and evil report the poor duchess had lived on, loving her husband and leading a life at least far more regular than that of the court, though she possessed the Italian love of the artistic and the beautiful and was very extravagant. The king, now often idiotic when he was not raving, had been turned completely against her. To amuse and distract him, and also to strengthen the Burgundian influence, the Duke of Burgundy provided him with a fair child as playmate and mistress. To the sway once held by Valentine over Charles there now succeeded Odette. She was little more than a child, but she became mistress as well as playfellow of the mad king. Of humble origin (*filia cujusdam mercatoris equorum*—daughter of a certain horse dealer), she wears in court history a name better than that she was born to, Odette de Champdivers; and the people, indulgent of the sin of the mad king, called her "la petite reine." She was happy, it seems, and kind to the king, amused him, was loved by him; and, more true to him than was quite pleasing to the Burgundians, did not play false to France in later years when Burgundy and England were leagued together, but is said to have used her influence over the king rather for France than for Burgundy. Of her we know little more than that she died about 1424, leaving a daughter whose legitimacy was

recognized by Charles VII., and who was honorably married to a petty gentleman of Poitou.

When the handsome, elegant, but unfaithful Louis was murdered, Valentine was at Blois with her children; the eldest was but sixteen, old enough to feel the loss, but not old enough to avenge it. But Valentine determined to avenge her husband; her grief gave her energy. She came at once to Paris with her youngest son and her daughter-in-law, that Isabelle de France who was already a widow from the death of Richard II., and now affianced to the young Duke d'Orléans. The king, sane at the time, was inexpressibly shocked by the murder of his brother, and was moved to tears when Valentine came before him to demand justice upon the murderer. He promised to act, and probably really meant what he said, but his mind was not capable of sustained effort. Jean de Bourgogne was making active preparations for a descent upon Paris with a retinue so formidable in numbers as to be an army; and Valentine retired to Blois, to bide her time. Jean, hardly opposed by Isabeau or any of the few who might be supposed either to exercise some authority or to sympathize with the Orléans faction, came to Paris, boldly hired lawyers and quibbling theologians to justify the "death which he had inflicted upon the person of the Duke d'Orléans," and made the poor madman who was king issue letters patent declaring that he, the king, "took out of his heart all displeasure against his very dear and well-beloved cousin of Burgundy for having put out of the world his brother of Orléans."

Isabeau, who had shown herself utterly incapable of action in this crisis, remained at Melun until the arrogant and dangerous Duke of Burgundy had forced matters in this way and had been called away to repress a rebellion of Liége. Then she and her allies, with three thousand

troops, entered Paris (August 26, 1408). Valentine came next day, and with her the young Charles d'Orléans, destined to become famous as one of France's sweetest poets, although kept a prisoner in England for twenty-five years. The king being once more incapacitated, it was decided that Isabeau should preside at the hearing of the formal complaint of the Duchess of Orléans. When the mourning widow and the youthful Duke of Orléans came before the council to demand a hearing, their plea was readily granted, for the menacing figure of Jean Sans Peur was no longer there to intimidate Isabeau and the friends of his victim. The next day, before the young Duke of Guyenne, who acted in the place of the king, the legal and ecclesiastical dignitaries employed by Valentine exerted themselves to exculpate Louis d'Orléans from the charges of sorcery and tyranny and to show that Jean de Bourgogne should be punished for the murder. The arguments of the Orléans advocates were far superior to the shallow, sophistical, utterly shameless harangues which had been delivered in defence of Jean. The legal advocate asked, on behalf of Valentine and her children, that Jean be compelled to come humbly to the Louvre and there to apologize to the king and to the widow and her children; that his houses in Paris be razed; that he be ordered to expend great sums in founding churches and convents, in expiation of his crime; and that he be banished beyond seas for twenty years, and, after his return, be not suffered to approach nearer than one hundred leagues to the queen and the Orléans princes.

But Valentine, though she prevailed on the queen and the princes of the council to agree to summon Jean de Bourgogne to trial before the Court of Parliament, was impotent to prosecute her cause. For Jean, after a ferocious suppression of the rebellious citizens of Liége, came

boldly back to Paris, was received as a victor and a friend by the people of Paris, and so overawed the other members of the council that the Orléans sympathizers dared not even dream of prosecuting the trial of this unabashed murderer.

Valentine de Milan and her sons retired to Blois, fearing even further outrages from the triumphant Burgundians. Well might she now have justified the pathetic motto which she had assumed at her husband's tragic death: *Rien ne m'est plus, plus ne m'est rien,*—"There is nothing more for me, nothing matters more." This inscription, which she caused to be placed in the Franciscan Church at Blois, must have borne an added bitterness to her heart when she saw the selfish Isabeau making friends with the murderer of Louis. The wretched queen and the impotent members of the council were glad to make peace with Jean; they accepted his hospitality and cowered before him. Isabeau, caring nothing for the power of the crown, caring nothing for her husband or her children, caring indeed for but one thing, money, eagerly accepted that from the hands still red with the blood of the man she had loved.

With her children about her, Valentine languished at Blois for a year. She had sought out one of Louis's natural sons, for whom she manifested affection and who, she used to say, was her own by rights, and more fitted to avenge his father than any of the other children. Valentine was in this a good judge, for the spirited, ardent lad whom she loved for his father's sake was none other than Jean, Comte de Dunois, afterward famous among the martial heroes of France as "Le Bâtard d'Orléans." Valentine died on December 4, 1408, and well might they say that she had died of a broken heart; for the one great emotion of her life had been the passionate devotion to one of the most despicable men that ever had a faithful wife—a

devotion generous enough, indeed, to excuse even follies and infidelities.

It was well for Valentine that death came when it did, for it saved her from still further sorrows and humiliations. Four months after her death, her unhappy sons were led to Chartres to go through the forms of a solemn reconciliation with their father's murderer. The duke expressed his contrition for "the fact of the murder committed upon Louis d'Orléans, howbeit this was done for the good of the king and the kingdom, as he was ready to prove, if desired." With such insulting phrases the sons were compelled to be satisfied, and they were forced to swear, with tears that they could not restrain, to harbor no ill feelings against their dear cousin of Burgundy, for whom the king, the queen, and the princes of the blood all interceded.

In this shameful mockery of a peace, ratified in the great cathedral of Chartres, Isabeau de Bavière had acted for the Duke of Burgundy. She was soon to give still further proof of her heartlessness and ingratitude, when Jean de Bourgogne arbitrarily arrested, tortured, and executed Jean de Montaigu, superintendent of finances, who had been an old servant of the queen, who had even given her that splendid Hôtel Barbette in which she had last supped with Louis d'Orléans, and who had drawn up the treaty of reconciliation between the houses of Burgundy and Orléans. Isabeau might have interceded in his behalf, and did make some move to do so; but a promise that her son should share in the confiscated wealth of Montaigu was enough to purchase her consent to the latter's death.

Isabeau was at this time busying herself less and less about affairs of state; since she had leagued herself in secret with Jean de Bourgogne she had no cares but those

attendant upon providing pleasures and amusements for herself. Her son, the dauphin, following in Isabeau's footsteps, was scandalizing all Paris by his orgies. At last, the people of Paris rose in one of their occasional sincere but futile attempts to reform the manners of a corrupt court. We shall not deal with the horrors of this outburst, one of the many little wavelets of popular indignation presaging, but presaging only to heedless revellers, the great tidal wave that was to envelop and bear down the just and the unjust alike some four hundred years later. The butchers and bakers and honest workingmen, led chiefly by a surgeon, Jean de Troyes, came by thousands to reform the morals of the dauphin. This miserable debauchee, as well as the rest of the court, trembled before them, and willingly conceded anything that could be asked. Even the poor mad king, whom the people loved and did not blame, had the white hood, emblem of the commune, placed upon his head, and smiled pitifully at his rough but well-meaning subjects. Forthwith, Isabeau equipped her head with a white hood, and so did all the court, the judges, and even the learned doctors of the University. But Isabeau's white hood was not wide enough to cover the scandalous horns of her headdress. Rising to the point of fury upon hearing that the dauphin, probably at the instigation of his mother, had been in communication with the Orleanist forces to induce them to march upon Paris, the Cabochiens, as the communists called themselves, in May, 1413, invaded the palace itself and arrested Louis de Bavière, the queen's brother, and as many as fifteen of the ladies of her suite—probably such as had made themselves peculiarly conspicuous and offensive by the extravagance and the indecency of their costumes. Isabeau wept, and pleaded vainly for a respite for her brother, then on the eve of his

marriage; the stern moralists from the markets of Paris were inexorable and Louis went to jail unmarried, while Isabeau went to bed sick with childish fury.

For a moment turning our attention from the queen, let us advert to the political conditions in France. From the time of the assassination of Louis d'Orléans there had been civil war, with rare and brief intervals of peace, between the partisans of Burgundy and those of Orléans, now led by Bernard d'Armagnac, whose daughter Charles d'Orléans had married after the early death of his first wife, Isabelle de France. While civil war in itself would have caused misery and ruin enough, its horrors were enhanced by the crafty policy of Henry IV. of England, who, when he was not able to intervene in person, responded to the solicitations of first one party and then the other, and thus caused Armagnacs and Bourguignons to exhaust themselves in fruitless strife. It was the craft of Henry IV. and the folly of France that prepared the way for Agincourt, that crushing victory of the great Henry V., who in the presence of the overwhelming French army proclaimed, in Shakespeare's paraphrase of his words:

> "We are enow
> To do our country loss; and if to live,
> The fewer men, the greater share of honor.
> God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more!"

The event justified King Harry's boastful confidence: the chivalry of France found itself discredited, dead, or in captivity. And yet, even in the hour of France's distress, the indolent Isabeau could hardly be prevailed upon to take any action in behalf of her son, the dauphin, Louis de Guienne who, in fact, lived but a little over two months after Agincourt, and was succeeded by Jean de Touraine. In two years more (1417) Jean de Touraine

was dead, poisoned, it was said, by Bernard d'Armagnac; the new dauphin, Charles, was a boy of but fourteen years.

This Charles, one of the most uncomfortably cold and contemptible personages in history, had been reared by the queen and the Armagnac party with sentiments of the bitterest hatred against the Burgundians. Determined to win complete control of Charles, Bernard d'Armagnac sought to discredit Isabeau with her son and with the king. There was no difficulty in finding pretexts, for the sober-minded Juvenal des Ursins tells us that in the château of Vincennes, whither Isabeau had retired to revel more at ease, "many shameful things were done" by the queen and her troop of rakes and gaudily dressed ladies; but indecency in dress was not the only scandal that Bernard revealed to the king, who was at the time in better mental condition than for years.

As he rode back from the château one evening the king met Loys de Boisbourdon, whom he knew to be one of Isabeau's associates. Suddenly suspicious and resolved to know the whole truth, Charles had him arrested and put to the question (*i.e.*, tortured). Such horrors were revealed by this unlucky sharer of the queen's pleasures that Charles deemed them not fit for further circulation, and accordingly Loys de Boisbourdon carried his secrets with him into a sack, which was inscribed: *Laissez passer la justice du roi,*—"Make way for the justice of the king,"—and the waters of the Seine covered the sack and the sinner. The mad king's justice, of which we read with a certain joyful sympathy, was not ended, for he sent the queen and the duchess of Bavaria to Blois, and later to Tours, where they were compelled to live under surveillance and in salutary simplicity. The dauphin seized some moneys belonging to Isabeau, who henceforth cherished the most unrelenting hatred for her own

son, accusing him of being responsible for her exile. The real grief to her, we may feel sure, was the loss of her money.

From this time, we find Isabeau intriguing with the Duke of Burgundy. As Jean was marching upon Paris he came into the neighborhood of Tours. The pious Isabeau was suddenly filled with a desire to hear mass at a particular convent some distance outside the walls. While she was engaged in her devotions the troops of Burgundy, in ambush, surrounded the convent and "captured" Isabeau and her guardians. The queen and her ally, styling themselves governors of France, established a parliament at Amiens, sent out decrees by authority of the "council of the queen and the duke," and fought the dauphin on paper and in the field. When in June, 1418, the Parisians, provoked beyond endurance by the exactions and the arrogance of the Armagnac nobles, massacred every Armagnac that they could find, Isabeau stood too much in awe of these fierce men of the common people to enter Paris. Had she not seen their violence before, merely because she lived in luxury while they starved? She waited for the arrival of Jean de Bourgogne, and the two entered Paris together on July 14th. The dauphin, the sole hope of France, fled before the armies of his mother.

As early as May, 1419, the queen had been in negotiation with the English to disinherit her son, when the sudden death of Jean Sans Peur, who was assassinated at a conference with the dauphin in September, 1419, interrupted her plans; but she was determined at all hazards not to fall into the hands of her son. She wrote a letter of condolence to the widowed Duchess of Burgundy, and promised the new duke, Philippe le Bon, to assist him in punishing the dauphin. Philippe, like all this race of Burgundian dukes, was a man of action, a man of strong

character, slightly more scrupulous than his father, and yet not entirely without inclination to sacrifice honor to policy. It is not to be wondered at that, justly indignant at the treacherous murder of his father, he should have sacrificed the interests of France to satisfy his resentment against the dauphin.

The queen, the Duke of Burgundy, and the unhappy king, a mere tool in their hands, treated at once with Henry V. It was stipulated in the preliminaries that Henry should aid them and be aided by them in war upon the dauphin. The selfish mother who thus enlisted even foreigners in her war against her son was capable of yet worse things. It was agreed that Henry should marry Catherine de France, the youngest daughter of Isabeau, and should at once receive control of the entire kingdom, in consideration of the incapacity of Charles VI.

Isabeau de Bavière was merely a wanton, an idle, vain, shallow-hearted seeker after pleasure, utterly incapable of taking seriously her rôle as Queen of France. With such love as her heart was capable of feeling, she loved Catherine, while her mean nature could never forgive the son who was the heir of France. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find her signing and causing the king to sign a treaty which violated every principle of patriotism and honor. By the treaty signed at Troyes on May 21, 1420, Charles, Duke of Touraine, Dauphin of France, was disinherited; the very principles of the Salic law were set at naught; and the heritage of Charles was bestowed, not even upon one of his elder sisters, but upon that Catherine of France, the youngest child, now Queen of England, and, in failure of heirs of her body, upon her husband, Henry V. of England. The two nations were to be merged, each retaining its distinctive laws, but both were to be under the rule of English sovereigns, and Henry was to aid

in restoring peace and in destroying "the rebels" under Charles, "called the Dauphin." One of the bribes paid to Isabeau for selling the kingdom of her son was a pension; for we find an ordinance of Henry, "heir and regent of France," granting to the queen the sum of two thousand francs per month.

Isabeau's enjoyment of her pension was not destined to be of long continuance. The brilliant Henry V. died on August 31, 1422; and less than two months later died Charles VI., *le bien aimé*. During thirty of the forty-two years of his reign he had been incapacitated by madness or by idiocy, and in the intervals France had been worse misgoverned than ever before in her history; so that, with wars foreign and domestic and with the shameless extravagance of the court, the kingdom had been reduced to a deplorable state, scores dying in the streets of Paris of sheer hunger while the English king was spending his first triumphant winter in that city. For all these evils and miseries the people placed the blame where, in good truth, it belonged,—on the queen and the royal princes. For the mad king there was nothing but a compassionate love, a tender sympathy; the people pitied this kindly unfortunate, abandoned by his wife, used as a tool by first one set of princes and then another.

At the funeral of Charles VI. not a single prince of France was present; the English Bedford conducted the whole sad affair. "As the body of the King was put in the sepulchre beside his predecessors, the heralds broke their rods and cast them into the grave . . . And then the Berri king-at-arms, accompanied by several heralds and pursuivants, cried out over the grave: 'May God have mercy upon the very noble and very excellent Prince Charles, sixth of the name, our lawful and sovereign lord!' And after this the aforesaid king-at-arms cried out: 'May

God grant long life and prosperity to Henry, by the grace of God King of France and of England, our sovereign lord!' And then the heralds raised aloft their truncheons with the fleur-de-lis, crying: *'Vive le roi! Vive le roi!'* And some of those present answered *Noël* (the ancient salutation to the King); but there were some who wept."

Thus the wretched Isabeau's work was, it seemed, complete, her son being a fugitive before the arms of the foreigner, while her infant grandson was King of France. From this time she disappears completely from the scene of action, drawing her meagre pension from the hands of the English, who treated her with deserved contempt, and cursed by all France for the memory of her evil deeds. We catch but a fleeting glimpse of her, living in obscurity at the royal palace of Saint-Pol. When on December 2, 1431, the young King Henry VI. made his solemn entry into his capital of Paris, the royal procession passed by the windows of the palace, and the boy king, looking up, saw an old woman in faded finery, surrounded by a bevy of women attendants. They told him it was his grandmother, the frivolous and once beautiful Isabeau de Bavière, and he doffed his cap, while Isabeau bowed to him and turned aside to weep. Did she weep from sincere contrition, or merely from regret of the departed luxury and extravagance of her life? She was not to live many years longer; but it was long enough to know that France had survived even her treachery and that her son was at peace with the Duke of Burgundy. So far from rejoicing, it is said that she died of regret that the treaty of Troyes had come to naught, her death occurring on September 24, 1435. She died with outward show of piety, and was buried as meanly, says a contemporary, as if she had been a humble *bourgeoise,* but four persons being present at the graveside.

The very portraits of Isabeau de Bavière, and of other women of her court, suggest sensuality. They are fat, and of the earth, earthy, suggesting lives led in indolence and the pursuit of pleasures not of the highest. As Michelet says, "Obesity is a characteristic of the figures of this sensual epoch. See the statues at Saint Denys; those of the fourteenth century are clearly portraits. See, in particular, the statue of the Duke de Berri in the subterranean chapel of Bourges, with the ignoble fat dog lying at his feet." As was the epoch, so was the queen; she was not actively bad, except where interference with her pleasures was threatened; she was merely a vain and utterly incapable woman of low tastes and cold heart who was called upon to be Queen of France in the most disastrous period of the history of that land. We need not think her a second Fredegonde, as some historians have tried to represent her; for her follies and her vices were such as to cause abhorrence by their puerility or their bestiality rather than to stir the deeper feelings of fear and hate excited by the greater among the bad women of history.

Chapter XI

Christine de Pisan

XI

CHRISTINE DE PISAN

"SEULETE suy et seulete veuil estre,
Seulete m'a mon doulz ami laissiée,
Seulete suy sans compagnon ne maistre,
Seulete suy dolente et courrouciée,
Seulete suy en langueur mesaisiée,
Seulete suy plus que nulle esgarée,
Seulete suy sans amis demourée."

[Alone am I in the world, and alone would I remain,
Alone has my dear love left me,
Alone am I, a poor lone woman, without companion or master,
Alone am I, stricken with sorrow and anguish of mind,
Alone am I, and ill at ease,
Alone am I, more lonely than one who has lost her way,
Alone have I been left without friends.]

This complaint of one who has lost her lover, or been betrayed and forsaken by him, might well have been the lament of France, betrayed by Isabeau de Bavière and left naked to her enemies. But the author of the lament, though one ready enough to find matter for her pen in the condition of her adopted country, had no thought of France in this case; for the little *ballade* was composed by Christine de Pisan with no other reference than to her own life.

The age of the mad king and the bad queen would not have been, one would think, favorable to the advancement

of literature; and yet some of the best literature of mediæval France was composed while Isabeau de Bavière was still alive. We shall allude at this time to but two writers, Froissart, of whom we have already said something, and Christine de Pisan, both of whom were writing between 1380 and 1400. Christine, the first professional authoress in France of whose life we have record, is well worthy of study both as an authoress and as a woman.

The fourteenth century was the heyday of the astrologer as it was of the witch, and the wise Charles V., "le Salomon de la France," was not alone in his superstition when he placed his reliance upon the predictions of the learned doctor, Thomas of Pisa, whom he had summoned from Italy to be court astrologer. We are told that the nobles and great ones of the earth at that time "dared do nothing new without the commands of astrology; they dared neither build castles, nor churches, nor begin war, nor even so much as put on a new robe, undertake a journey, nor go out of their houses without the consent of the stars." Whether or not this be somewhat of an exaggeration, there is no question that Thomas de Pisan occupied, at the court of Charles V., a position not only lucrative but dignified. Established in the Louvre itself, the Italian scholar sent for his wife and daughter to make their home in France. The daughter, then (1368) but five years of age, was already a precocious little lady, and was presented to the king when she arrived in France. Charles was pleased with the graces of the child, and made her his especial protégée, promising that she should have as good an education and place at his court as any *demoiselle* of noble birth. Charles was himself a scholar and capable of appreciating the nobility of intelligence; and in this case he had not judged amiss.

It is from the works of Christine herself—*La Vision de Christine,* in prose, *La Mutation de Fortune,* and *Le Chemin de Long Estude,* in verse—that we learn most of her story, which was happy and uneventful up to her fourteenth year. At this time she had already acquired, under her father's careful tuition, a remarkable familiarity with the classic authors of Rome, and could turn off as neat Latin verses as any boy in the schools, and could also write French verse. It was most fortunate for her that her father, "not thinking girls any more unfit for learning than boys," allowed her to "glean some straws of learning." Before she was fifteen Christine was married to a notary, Etienne Castel, a Picard gentleman of good birth and excellent character, whom she loved tenderly.

The prosperity of her family was first threatened in 1380, when her good patron King Charles died. Then her father, who had lavishly expended a large part of the handsome stipend he received as astrologer, found himself suddenly reduced almost to poverty, and he did not long survive his royal patron. The earnings of her husband not being sufficient to maintain the family, Christine cast about for a means to put to use the education she had received, and had already begun, by some small works, her career as an authoress, when the sudden death of her husband, carried off by the plague in 1389, left her alone and without resources, and under the necessity of providing some sort of support for her mother and her three children.

She never ceased to mourn for her husband, and the pages of her works are filled with poems which, like the little *ballade* that heads this chapter, hold tender allusion to her loss. Though to modern ears the perpetual repetition of this strain of mourning grows monotonous, some of the sweetest of her poems are those inspired by this

sentiment, expressed with a directness and a simplicity that must appeal to any lover of truth and poetry. "He loved me," she sings, "and 'twas right that he should, for I had come to him as a girl-bride; we two had made such wise provision in all our love that our two hearts were moved in all things, whether of joy or of sorrow, by a common wish, more united in love than the hearts of brother and sister."

She too might have wished to die, she says, in order to follow the loved one, but that there were the children and the mother whom she alone could care for. The energy of her character at last saved the fortunes of her family. Her first task, the saving of some last remnants of the property of her father and her husband, was rendered more difficult by the almost interminable delays of the courts and the dishonesty of advocates and opponents who had more influence with the "blind goddess" than the daughter of the old astrologer. She herself gives an interesting picture of her difficulties, all bravely met for the sake of her children, and in time overcome. Not the least of her worries was the determination to conceal from her friends the desperate state of her fortunes; she was too proud to appear poor: "There is no sorrow equal to this, and no one who has not experienced it can know what it means. . . . Under a furred mantle and a cloak of scarlet, well saved, but not often renewed, there was many a shiver, and in a bed properly appointed with all things of comfort, many a sleepless night. But our meal was always a simple one, as befits a widow."

But from the more sordid cares, the covering of her poverty under threadbare finery that did not keep out the cold, and the vulgar loungers who would ogle her and leer at her as she went about the courts, there was a refuge in the pursuits which were to earn her bread. At first

Christine sang of her lost husband, and the grace and earnestness of these poems pleased the fashionable public of the day. Her style was the result of long and careful preparation, and her mind almost unconsciously reflected the things which she had read and admired in classic literature; and thus she transmitted to her readers much information, not in itself new or original, but strange to them, and therefore interesting. Some of the great personages of the court still remembered the little Italian protégée of Charles V., and asked her to write for them poems of love, in less lugubrious vein. We have seen that the troubadours thought it almost a truism: "Without love, no poesy," for love was their only theme; but here we find a woman who frankly admits that she has loved and loves no more, and who yet undertakes to write love poems for a price, and does write some exquisite ones. Poetry made to order can never seem spontaneous after we know that the poet has found inspiration not at the shrine of Phœbus but at that of Plutus; but many of the poetic masterpieces have been composed under stress of dire poverty, of which we are fortunately not always aware when reading them. And so, among the six or seven score little *ballades* and *jeux* which in Christine's works are marked *à vendre*—for sale—there are many that we could read with more sincere pleasure if we did not doubt the genuineness of the sentiment expressed. These little poems, many of them really graceful and charming playthings of a moment, lose so much in translation that I shall not attempt to render into English their ephemeral charm. The French of five hundred years ago is not "Frenshe of Paris" to most of us: rather is it of the school of "Stratford atte Bow," or of some other school we have never attended, and therefore I have chosen to give, with some changes in orthography, one of

the simplest of Christine's *jeux à vendre*. It is a lover's song in praise of his lady beautiful and good:

"Je vous vens la rose de mai?
Oncques en ma vie n'aimai
Autant dame ne damoiselle
Que je fais vous, gente femelle,
Si me retenez à ami,
Car tout avez le coeur de mi (moi).
. . . . . .
Je vous vens l'oiselet en gage?
Si vous êtes faulx, c'est dommage,
Car vous êtes et belle et doulx,
Si n'ayez telle tache en vous,
Et digne serez d'être aimée,
Belle et bonne et bien renommée."

In other poems written for her courtly admirers Christine does not hesitate to voice sentiments quite out of keeping with the manners of her patrons. It is thus that she says: "If true honor is to be reapportioned, many do I know who will have but a little share in it, despite their thinking that they have all that wealth, beauty, noble birth, and fine clothes can give, and that therefore they are very princes. But however noble he be in outward show, no man is noble who lends himself to evil deeds or evil words. Thus some there are in whose boasting there is not one word of truth, who will tell you that the fairest ladies in the land have honored them with love. Good Lord! what gentility! How ill it becomes a noble man to lie and tell false tales of women! Such fellows are but *villains,* pure and simple; and should there be a redistribution of honors, theirs should be cut down."

Not infrequently, alas, the pride of learning mars her verse; it is overloaded with pedantic allusions, stiff with learning, and too manifestly the product of a learned head rather than of an overflowing heart. Where these faults appear less, or not at all, is in the poems inspired by

genuine feeling for her loved ones; there the real heart of the woman, bravely struggling to bear up and smile before the world, is laid bare to us in sudden glimpses of unpremeditated poetry. It is an old theme, but one of pathos ever fresh, that we find in the following lines:

"Je chante par couverture [*i. e.*, contenance],
Mais mieux pleurassent mes oeil (yeux),
Ne nul ne sait le travail
Que mon pauvre coeur endure.
Pour ce (je) muce (cache) ma douleur
Qu'en nul je ne vois pitié.
Plus on a cause de pleur (pleurer),
Moins on trouve d'amitié.
Pour ce plainte ne murmure
Ne fais de mon piteux deuil.
Ainçois (plutôt) (je) ris quand pleurer veuil (veux),
Et sans rime et sans mesure
Je chante par couverture."

It is, you see, the old *motif*, in melodramatic pathos that of the harlequin Dorkins, who must play his part in the pantomime even though his child lie dying, in tragedy that of Lady Macbeth, who must play the queen by day and suffer the torments of the murderess at night. It is not the novelty but the universality and truth of the idea or sentiment that makes Christine's verses rank as poetry.

But love songs alone could not support a family of five; the Church, so often the refuge of forlorn women, might have offered Christine a refuge, but not support for those dependent on her, since she had not sufficient influence to assure herself of any office of dignity and emolument in the convents of the proud and wealthy. Her pen must be her resource; and thus Christine de Pisan became not merely an authoress, but the first authoress to support herself by her pen. For some of her shorter poems she received not inconsiderable sums; but longer works,

works of more permanent value must be undertaken, and Christine valiantly set to work.

Her first task was to secure a patron, for only some great lord could afford to pay sums sufficient to enable her to live: there was no eager public of thousands, educated by the printing press to expect, to welcome, to demand fresh intellectual food. One of her patrons was the great Duke of Burgundy, Philippe le Hardi, to whom she dedicated a very long and partly autobiographical poem called *La Mutation de Fortune*. She tells her story with rather too much display of the fact that she knows all the famous apologues and anecdotes that might apply to her case; still, it is an earnest and in some ways interesting account of how she had been compelled to take up a profession not then regarded as befitting a woman—how, as she says, she had turned herself "from woman to man." She read this work to Philippe de Bourgogne in that same palace where she had once been a familiar inmate, where she had played as a child, where she had learned to know the famous men through whose aid Charles V. had well-nigh regenerated France. It is not surprising that Philippe de Bourgogne should think of her as specially fitted to undertake a task requiring intimate knowledge of that king and his time. The duke, sending for her one day as she sat in the midst of a pile of books, pen in hand, asked her to undertake the writing of a life of his great brother.

With ready devotion she set about writing the life of Charles V., of the king who, "when I was a child, gave me my bread." In due time her book, *Le Livre des faits et bonnes mœurs du roi Charles V.*, was completed; but he for whom she had written it had died in 1404, before half was done. The loss of her generous friend and protector was a serious blow to the poetess. Her mother had also died; while Christine must plod wearily on, though "her

heart was filled with joy when she remembered that the day was not very far off when she herself would go to join the loved ones."

The history of Charles V. is a work of which one hardly knows what to say. As history, it is manifestly a failure, for Christine had either no wish or no opportunity to present facts in a narrative at once accurate, detailed, and clear; her work lacks both the accuracy and the breadth of view of genuine history; it is rather, as one critic remarks, an *éloge*, a eulogy upon Charles V.—which, indeed, had been what Philippe desired. The book is in prose, and though the style lacks the clearness and vividness to which we are accustomed in such men of genius as Villehardouin, Joinville, and her own contemporary, Froissart, we must remember that these men had reached the high-water mark of French style, not to be equalled, in sober truth, till the Renaissance, the "New Birth," had regenerated the fallen life and literature of Europe. As prose of the early fifteenth century, Christine's work is better than any other then written, except that of Froissart; and not a little of his charm comes less from the style than from the matters of which he chose to write. There is in Christine's book little of the gorgeousness of chivalry: was not the king in whose praise she wrote a king who won his battles at the council table, while Du Guesclin, upon the field of battle, gave the hard knocks which his sovereign, weak and sickly, could neither give nor take? Where Christine does succeed is in her portraits of the king and his courtiers, whose characters she knew perfectly and whose good and bad traits she does not scruple to depict with such even justice as she may. To quote the words of one of her most recent critics, who does not fail to call attention to the awkward Latinisms of her diction and the lopsided Ciceronian periods in her attempts

at elevation or eloquence: "No one has made us feel more distinctly the winning grace of the Duke d'Orléans, brother of Charles VI., nor has any one better depicted the physical aspect of Charles V.; clearly do we see the long face, the broad forehead, the prominent eyes, and the thin lips; the beard is very thick, the cheekbones high and prominent, the skin brown and pale, the whole countenance thin to emaciation; it is the face of an ascetic, tempered by the gentleness of the expression and something staid and thoughtful in the whole look. Nor is there mere banality and commonplace in the moral portrait of the king; if she praises his *chevalerie* (chivalry), she does not conceal the fact that, weak and sickly, his hand never drew the sword from the day of his accession to the day of his death."

The mere list of Christine's works would fill much space, and in the end we should not be much edified thereby; for she was a voluminous writer, really a hack writer, and therefore turned out a huge pile of ill-considered stuff, in prose and in verse, which she well knew would win no fame for her—it were sufficient could it but win bread for her children! Much of this work is mere paraphrase of Latin authors of great repute and much read in the Middle Ages, though now all but forgotten: the moral Seneca, the martial Vegetius and Frontinus, Valerius Maximus, and honest Plutarch (whom critics praise, and only unfortunate boys read). It is from these and the like of these that she gleaned much of such works as *L'Epître d'Othéa à Hector,* on the training of a prince; *Le Chemin de Long Estude,* a long moral poem (1402); *Le Livre de Prudence; Le Livre des Faits d'armes et de chevalerie; Le Livre de Police* (political economy). With such compilations, doubtless both useful and interesting when there were fewer books of general information, encyclopedias and the like, Christine filled many a manuscript, and much of her work still

remains in manuscript, though the *Société des anciens textes français* is slowly reprinting her works, which will fill four large volumes with verse alone and overflow into several more with prose.

With the great mass of the work left by Christine de Pisan we shall not even attempt to deal; but the presentation of one of her favorite enthusiasms will prove, we hope, of some interest. Though forced to earn her own bread and so to compete with men, Christine never forgot that she was a woman; neither in conduct nor in her writings did she ever so behave or so write as to forfeit that dearest of her privileges as a woman, the respect of men. Not only did she respect herself, but she was determined that men should respect her, and moreover that they should not with impunity malign woman. We have shown in a previous chapter how outrageous was the literary attitude toward the fair sex, whom the satirists, big and little, were never tired of belaboring as the authors of all the evil in the world. Marriage and love are, of course, fertile subjects of satiric humor, as when the groom is told, in the *sermon joyeux* on the *Maux de mariage* (Misfortunes of Marriage), that, from the very wedding day: "all his money will take wings and fly away, but his wife will stay," and stay, and stay, until he is dead and buried, and then, as the church bell tolls his knell his dear wife will be thinking of how she can manage to marry his servant. "Verily," says another, speaking of the pilgrimage of marriage, "'tis a road to which there is no end till the weaker of the two be dead." It was this attitude against which Christine entered a vigorous protest, and she got into a little war of words with two of her contemporaries.

In several of the minor poems noted above there are allusions to the wrong of boastfulness, mendacity, and

evil speaking about women; but in the *Epître au Dieu d'Amour* (properly the Epistle *of*, not *to*, the God of Love), she brings upon the scene Love himself, who complains of and ridicules tale-telling and blabbing gallants, always ready to recount imaginary conquests of any woman whose name is mentioned. What honor is there, she asks, in deceiving a woman? This was in May, 1399, and it was not many years before she began to assault the chief citadel of the scorners of womanhood, the great *Roman de la Rose*. Her *Dit de la Rose* is dated on a day of all others most propitious to lovers, Saint Valentine's day, in the year 1402. Her poem contains the graceful conception of an order of chivalry whose symbol shall be the rose (so long fraught with evil associations through the influence of ungenerous clerks), and the chief of the vows exacted of the good knights shall be, never to be licentious, in word or in deed, with regard to women. The gauntlet thus thrown down before the admirers of the satirist—one might almost say misogynist—Jean de Meung, was not long in finding those willing to take it up. Two secretaries of Charles VI., Jean de Montreuil and Gonthier Col, assumed the defence of the *Roman de la Rose*, and various letters, sometimes couched in terms of good-humored raillery, sometimes sly and cutting, were exchanged between them and Christine. Which side, considered merely as debaters, really had the better of the literary duel we need not care; for the commonsense and the moral point of view was certainly not that which justified general condemnation of woman as an inferior and wicked creature, and also justified the degradation of the noblest emotions to mere sensuality. Christine, however, thought that she had made out such a good case for maligned femininity that she collected her letters and the answers, and dedicated the whole correspondence to Isabeau de Bavière.

It would be a pleasant relief to the gaudy colors in the picture of that unworthy queen if we could feel that she appreciated the delicate compliment thus paid her, or in any way encouraged the worthy defender of her sex.

This collection of prose and verse was not the only plea Christine made for women. She composed two other works, in prose, whose dominant notion is the rehabilitation of honest womanhood. The first of these, called *La Cité des Dames,* is one of those compilations descending in the main from Boccaccio's Latin work, *De Claris Mulieribus,*—"Concerning Famous Women,"—of which Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* and Tennyson's *Dream of Fair Women* are the greatest examples: the present work itself, indeed, is a record of this nature. But that which Chaucer and Tennyson treat poetically, imaginatively, with all the art of minds supremely artistic, Christine treats in a rather matter-of-fact way; that is, she is concerned to tell such anecdotes of famous women as will support her thesis of the essential nobility of the feminine character. In this way she has accumulated a considerable amount of evidence showing the patience, the devotion, the fidelity, the heroism of which women are capable under all circumstances of life. The heroines of antiquity are not alone in eliciting Christine's praises; for she devotes some attention to the patterns of virtue in her own day, to princesses, and to simple *bourgeoises,* and to one Anastasia, who is of peculiar interest to us because she was a fine illuminator, and may have been the artist who executed the beautiful illuminations in the manuscripts of Christine's own works.

The second of the prose works in behalf of women is the *Livre des Trois Vertus,* or *Trésor de la Cité des Dames,* a book of sage counsel to women of all classes and full of information most valuable for the historian of manners.

It is from this book that one receives the best impression of the fine moral character and catholicity of view of this woman living a life of hardship and struggle in the dark days of the mad king. She is no prude, but simple and charitable in her conception of the problems of life. Though herself a literary woman, she does not place too great stress upon learning for her sex: "This woman in love with scholarship intends, to be sure, that woman should acquire learning; but it must be for the purpose of developing her intelligence, of raising her heart to higher things, not of widening her field of ambitions, dethroning man and reigning in his stead."

The prodigious activity of this authoress can best be appreciated by reference to her own statement that, by the year 1405, she had "produced fifteen works of importance, without counting other special little *dittiés,* which together fill about seventy sheets of large size." The chief part of her work was already done; for the disturbed condition of the kingdom after the murder of Louis d'Orléans (1407) interrupted her labors. She had thoroughly naturalized herself in her adopted country, and this fervent patriot, who grieved that she was helpless to save France, must have suffered intensely during the dark years that followed. In 1410, she wrote a *Lamentation* upon the horrors of civil war, and two years later, after the overthrow of the communist government of Paris, the Cabochiens, she wrote a *Livre de la Paix,* full of harsh but just criticisms upon those butchers and bakers who would reform the whole world if first allowed to destroy it. Then came the greater sorrows of Agincourt and the English conquest. Christine fled from Paris, no longer the home of those princes who had favored her, and found refuge in a convent, probably the convent at Poissy to which her daughter had already retired. It was the

breaking up of her little family, her two sons going back to Italy to seek a more favorable field for their peaceful talents, and the mother remaining in seclusion for eleven years.

It was probably not long before her death, of which we do not know the precise date, that the good lady heard in her cloister the glad news of the coming of the Maid of Orleans and of the consecration of the king at Rheims. All her love for her dear land of France welled up in her heart, and in gladness and wonder she sang the *Dittié de Jeanne d'Arc,* the praise of this "girl of sixteen years . . . before whom enemies fly, not one dare stand. . . . Oh! what honor to our sex! our sex, that God loves, it would seem." We cannot better conclude this account of a pure and noble woman—of one who loved her husband, her children and her country, and who, above all, preserved respect for herself and for her womanhood in an evil age—than in the words of her triumphant song of joy which proclaims that France is saved, and that it is a woman who saves France:

"Chose est bien digne de mémoire
Que Dieu par une vierge tendre
Sur France si grand' grâce estendre.
Tu Johanne, de bonne heure née,
Benoist (Béni) soit (le) Ciel qui te créa,
Par miracle fut (elle) envoyée
Au roi pour sa provision;
Son fait n'est pas illusion,
Car bien a été éprouvée. . . .
Par conseil en conclusion
A l'effet la chose est prouvée,
Et sa belle vie, par (ma) foi,
Par quoi (laquelle) on ajoute plus (de) foi
A son fait, quoi qu'elle fasse,
Toujours en Dieu devant la face. . . .
Hée! quel honneur au féminin
Sexe! que Dieu l'aime, il appert!"

Chapter XIII

The Savior of France

XII

THE SAVIOR OF FRANCE

CETTE fille ne vient pas de la terre; elle est envoyée du Ciel. Thus it is that a contemporary, a great politician and satirist, Alain Chartier, expresses his convictions regarding the Maid of Orléans. To Christine de Pisan, too, she seemed, as we have seen, a messenger from God. It was a time when all good patriots wept, when the fair land of France was a prey to the spoiler, when Armagnac, Bourguignon, and hated Saxon roamed at will over the land and laid it waste. In one of Alain Chartier's political satires, *Le Quadriloge invectif,* the three estates of the realm—nobles, clergy, commons—are in turn appealed to by La France, to "have pity of their common mother." The commons, or *Peuple,* replies: "It is the labor of my hands that feeds and clothes these cowardly loafers, and they oppress me with famine and the sword. . . . They live upon me, and I am slowly dying under them. . . . The banners of the host are raised, they say, against our enemies, but no deeds are done except against me." It was a complaint but too true, as was that in Chartier's *Livre de l'Espérance:* "The nights are too short for the shameless pleasures (of the gentlemen at court), and the days too short for sleeping. . . . It would seem that noble estate means no more than license to do wrong and yet go unpunished."

In this disregard of the moral law as well as of patriotic duties the dauphin himself led the way. One hardly knows what verdict to pass upon this man, for his character was a blend of qualities that might have made greatness and that yet resulted in nothing but meanness, littleness of soul, and ingratitude. It is not the acid meanness of Louis XI., his son, for that had a purpose; what in Louis XI. was true vinegar, sharp and biting, had not yet gone through the full process of fermentation in Charles VII. and was simply a fluid evil to the taste, with no useful properties. Reared at a court where pleasure was the only law, under the evil influence of Isabeau de Bavière—whenever she thought to trouble herself about him—and, later, of the savage and unscrupulous Bernard d'Armagnac, who wished to retain power for himself and hence debauched the young prince, it is not surprising to find Charles a libertine, and one easily controlled by any favorite who happened to be in the ascendant. As a boy of sixteen he had been made an accomplice, whether constructively guilty or not of the actual crime, in the murder of Duke Jean de Bourgogne. At nineteen he was proclaimed King of France by his handful of followers, while the victorious English were proclaiming Henry VI. in Paris (1422). Defeat followed defeat for his armies, owing partly to the demoralization of the troops, partly to the inability of the leaders to maintain any sort of discipline among the bands of half savage men at arms from Gascony, Brittany, Scotland, and even Italy and Spain. Yet for most of the disasters, Charles himself was to blame, since he continued to lead a life of slothful pleasure, making no serious efforts to control himself or to take an active part in the affairs of his ruined kingdom.

The salvation of France was to come from a woman, one as nearly a saint as mortal can be; but some part of

the preparation for the coming of that saint was made by other women, not by any means saintly. The wife of Charles VII. was Marie d'Anjou, who, with her husband, was under the domination of her mother, Yolande d'Aragon, one of those active, able, but unscrupulous women who rule by intrigue, who are content to let others claim the glory so long as the real secret of power is theirs. Queen Yolande, anxious to preserve the dignity of the house of Anjou for her son René, needed the support of France, and she hated England. She gained a remarkable ascendency over Charles VII., and used this most wisely for the good of France, though some of her methods may seem of a sort to disconcert prevailing opinions.

Seeing that Charles was by nature a libertine, she determined to make use of that side of his character, although at the expense of her own daughter. It was she who presented to Charles that famous and lovely *Dame de beauté,* Agnès Sorel. The rôle played by this mistress of the king is truly admirable as well as remarkable. Agnès was no vulgar woman, but an Aspasia of her time, of noble birth, beautiful, and of a character gentle as well as essentially good. It is no paradox to pronounce her good, though she led a life condemned by moral laws; for the laxity of the age must be considered, as well as the methods of the mistress herself. Even the wife of her royal lover respected Agnès Sorel, and there was friendship between them. So far from seeking to surround herself with idle and vicious companions and encouraging Charles in offending useful friends or wise counsellors, she used her influence, in conjunction with Yolande, to establish the credit of the Constable de Richemont, the most useful of Charles's allies at this time.

Legend has gilded her portrait for us, and much that is told of her is not susceptible of proof, but the tendency of

her influence is shown by one little incident. Charles, unable to win back his kingdom, unable to maintain himself in it north of the Loire, unable to find money to pay his troops, was yet able to build a château at Loches for Agnès Sorel. Here he was basking in her smiles and heedless of the distress of France, when accident gave Agnès a chance to rouse his nobler feelings. Charles had, to amuse the passing hour, called a fortune teller to the château, and stood by while the man told the fortune of his well-beloved Agnès. The mountebank, with the cunning of his kind, thought to flatter this vain and lovely lady by prophesying: "Some day thou shalt be the wife of the greatest king on earth." Agnès, with ready wit, rose at once to her occasion. "If that be my true fortune," said she to the dauphin, "I must leave you this instant and go marry the King of England; for I see that, in the sloth that confines you here, you will not long be King of France." The shot told, and Charles was stung into momentary activity. Throughout her life Agnès continued to exert a salutary influence upon him; and when she died,—poisoned, it was said, by the then dauphin, afterward Louis XI.,—evil favorites soon replaced the wise counsellors at the king's board, and his last years were as full of misery as had been those before Jeanne came mysteriously out of the east and gave him his crown.

It was not Charles, the miserable, ungrateful voluptuary whose character we have attempted to show, that was loved and saved by Jeanne d'Arc; it was France, represented to her in the person of the dauphin. For her, Charles was a symbol, a mere incarnate *patrie* for whose salvation she was commissioned by the Lord of Hosts; the man himself was nothing; in her simple peasant's heart, she hardly thought of him as a man, rather as a sort of divinity that could do no wrong, that must be worshipped,

that must first of all be saved and set up safely in its tabernacle of Rouen. Unworthier idol never was created than this insensible thing called the dauphin, with as little care for the victims crushed beneath him as if he had been in very truth a mere wooden Juggernaut or Mumbo Jumbo; but all of us worship unworthy idols and are quite unconscious of their unworthiness. And, as in the case of Jeanne, if worship and worshipper be pure, what matter if the idol be a little unsteady on the pedestal to which our blind devotion has raised it?

The worship of Jeanne for the dauphin had begun in very childhood, when this dream-guided little maid of Lorraine hardly knew what "king" or "kingdom" meant. Writers have remarked, as De Quincey and Michelet, upon the fact that Jeanne was born in a border land, on the marches of Lorraine and Champagne, in the debatable land between the great parties of Orléans and Burgundy; but the mere situation of this little village of Domrémy upon the great Franco-German highway is a geographical fact that could be conned over and over, and then forgotten, without our being one whit the better or the worse. The dead fact is nevertheless a fruitful seed of thought, if we but allow it to come to germination. We may recall that in the present day the most enthusiastic of those patriots of France who are ever clamoring misguidedly for war are the people of this one-time border of France. However misguided may be the demonstrations of the crowds who annually drape in mourning the statue of Strasbourg on the Place de la Concorde, an enthusiastic patriotism is their inspiration. "The outposts of France, as one may call the great frontier provinces," De Quincey says, "were of all localities the most devoted to the Fleurs de Lys. To witness, at any great crisis, the generous devotion to these lilies of the little fiery cousin

[Lorraine] that in gentler weather was forever tilting at the breast of France, could not but fan the zeal of France's legitimate daughters; whilst to occupy a post of honour on the frontiers against an old hereditary enemy of France would naturally stimulate this zeal by a sentiment of martial pride, by a sense of danger always threatening, and of hatred always smouldering. . . . The eye that watched for the gleams of lance or helmet from the hostile frontier, the ear that listened for the groaning of wheels, made the highroad itself, with its relations to centres so remote, into a manual of patriotic duty."

Nursed in an atmosphere of patriotism, therefore, the little Jeanne had the horrors of war brought vividly before her when a band of brigands, nominally English or Burgundian partisans, rushed down upon Domrémy, sacked the town, burned the church, and drove many of the inhabitants, including Jeanne's family, into temporary exile. The family came back again, and the immediate ravages of the soldiers were repaired, but Jeanne never forgot, and told in after years how she would shiver with horror and then weep from sheer pity at seeing her village friends come back wounded and bleeding from some affray with the English.

Jeanne, the daughter of one who is described as a *simple laboureur* (which may mean that he was an independent farmer in a small way, not a mere laborer), was born in 1412, and was therefore old enough to see and to appreciate the worst of the miseries of France and to understand the tales of war and of English outrages brought to her father's door by many a traveller on the great highway that passed through Domrémy; and her heart was filled with pity for the poor dauphin, repudiated by his own mother, exiled from his kingdom by the English, wandering aimlessly from province to province where the arms

of his enemies made it safe for him to pass. The child's mind could but be stirred and filled with those vague, generous dreams of sacrifice, of heroism, of impossible achievements, which, like other visions, fade "into the light of common day" with most of us. Not so with Jeanne, in whom from the start there was something mystical, something that set her apart from other children.

With her work-a-day life we are not concerned, nor with those members of her family who stand for none of the things of the spirit for which she was to serve. Her father, of whom even tradition has been able to make neither a monster nor a hero, was merely a commonplace peasant, apparently amiable and kindly, but manifestly incapable of sympathy with things ethereal and supernatural; we need not go so far as De Quincey and deny him patriotism: "He would greatly have preferred . . . the saving of a pound or so of bacon to saving the Oriflamme of France." And so with her brothers, Jean and Pierre; though ennobled by the king, and though doubtless very good fellows, they were certainly very far from being noble in spirit, or in any way comparable to their sister. For Jeanne's nobility was based upon no accident of birth or favor of a prince: it was the gift of God.

The life of Jeanne d'Arc was probably not essentially different from that of other girls of her class, at least up to her fourteenth or fifteenth year. From the testimony of those who recalled the childhood of the heroine long after she had become a heroine we must turn with some distrust; for motives the most diverse may have induced, and doubtless did induce, them to conceal or even to misrepresent many things in this simple story. But there seems to be no doubt that Jeanne tended sheep, like her sister and other children of the neighborhood, that she learned all the simple little domestic arts, and "was a

good girl, diligent at her work"; she herself refers with pride to her skill as a needlewoman: "My mother taught me so well that I could sew as well as any woman in Rouen," and Rouen was one of the centres of fine work; but of reading and writing, even the rudiments of education, she knew nothing. Of one other thing, too, there is no doubt, though the legend-mongers have doubtless colored the picture a little here also; this is that the child was pious, manifesting greater devoutness than was common among her class. And in this devoutness, too, a thing more significant still, she manifested a diffidence, a desire to withdraw herself and her prayers from the profanation of vulgar and inquisitive eyes.

Much has been made of the mysterious associations of forests fairy-haunted, of trees where the children danced and hung garlands in honor of some fairy queen, whom the good *curé* of the village devoutly exorcised every spring. What community in a land neighbored by mountains but has its "little people," whether fairies, hobgoblins, or gnomes? The learned doctors at Jeanne's trial were trying to fasten upon her some preposterous charge of witchcraft and association with the powers of evil; it was their business to drag in the fairies and to show that Jeanne knew more of such things than was good for the glory of God; and ever since, the biographers have seized upon what scanty ravellings of childish legend Jeanne could recall upon her trial, and have woven of them fine cobwebs of filmy pattern, to show how the whole soil of Domrémy, more than any other particular spot in France, produced mushroom crops of fairies, and that a very miasma of enchantment was in the air. The mass of fanciful and sometimes exquisite rhetoric on this theme in the lives of Jeanne would surely have convicted her of witchcraft in the fifteenth century. In good truth, Jeanne

probably had as firm belief in fairies as you and I once had in Hop-o'-my-Thumb and Red Ridinghood; but those were childish things, in no way connected with her mission.

That which is of importance to note is that she was always a gentle and tender-hearted girl, ready to nurse the sick or to play with the children. "Well do I know it," says an aged peasant who testified for her memory years after she was dead, "I was then but a child, and she nursed me." But most important of all is the knowledge that her enemies could not find in Domrémy one witness to testify against her; there was in her native village no envious wretch, no Ascalaphus, who could concoct a probable tale of any sort to the injury of one who had as a child led a life so pure, so good, but likewise so uneventful.

At what time Jeanne began to see visions we cannot tell exactly; it is probable that the dreams of childhood, long indulged, merged at first unconsciously into visions that seemed to her as real as things seen with the bodily eye. By her own account, it was some six or seven years after she first felt called by the heavenly voices before she found courage to attempt the apparently impossible things they commanded. One vision she remembered all her life long, because it was kept constantly before her mind by the great passion of her life. She herself tells of this one, and neither persuasions nor ridicule nor the terrors of the prison could shake her absolute faith in its reality. "Long had she heard celestial voices, sometimes counselling her to be a good girl, sometimes specially recommending to her the practice of piety and the careful guarding of her virginity, sometimes echoing in unison with her own thoughts as they told her of the woes of France and the groans of the people. One day as she sat working and musing in the garden next to the church wall, there came a bright and blinding light, a heavenly effulgence stronger

than the midday sun; then out of this glory came the voice, soft, yet commanding, of a man, whose glorious winged figure she could see dimly, saying: 'Jeanne, arise! go to the succor of the Dauphin, and thou shalt restore his kingdom to him.' The poor girl, all abashed, fell upon her knees: 'Messire, how can I do this, since I am but a poor girl, and know not how to ride or to lead men-at-arms?' But the voice insisted: 'Thou shalt go to the Sire de Baudricourt, commanding for the King at Vaucouleurs, and he will conduct thee to the Dauphin. Fear not; Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine will aid thee.' "

Jeanne was in tears, for the fear of the thing, not daring as yet to confide in anyone. But the voices continued to importune her, and again she saw the angel, him whom in her simple fashion she described as *moult prudhomme* (a very noble man), and whom she now recognized to be the very Saint Michael whose image she had seen in her church, triumphing over the dragon. And with him came fair women, all in white, with lights and troops of angels all about them, the holy and brave virgins Margaret and Catherine. They had come, as Saint Michael the Archangel had promised, to be her spiritual guides and comforters; and their blessed forms were never far from her, and their voices whispered to her to be of good cheer, for that through her and her alone France would be saved.

Tortured by doubts and fears, she revealed these visions to her mother, from whom she had learned her *Ave, Pater, Credo,* the sweet and simple faith that meant so much to her. Her mother was half inclined to believe in Jeanne, and was at least sympathetic; but her father could see in these visions but childish nonsense that would lead his daughter astray. For him there was no faith in such things; can one blame him if he thought them but the silly moonings of a child, and dealt with that child sternly in

the hope of saving her? He declared that he would drown Jeanne with his own hands rather than see her ride off with men-at-arms into that France of which he and she knew nothing but that it was from end to end given over to war and pillage. Thinking that marriage might dispel her illusions about saving France,—as indeed it would,—they persecuted her to marry a young villager who had fallen desperately in love with her and claimed that she had promised to marry him. With a courage that must have surprised even herself, she went before the ecclesiastical court of Toul and told her story so frankly that the judge dismissed the desperate lover. Not for her were the joys and sorrows of a wife and mother.

With all her determination and masculine contempt for those things that are terrors to most women, Jeanne loved her home. In after years she was ever sighing for the quiet life of her father's cottage, where she might sit and spin with her mother, or wander forth over the fields with her sister to tend the sheep. What a piteous struggle must there have been in her breast! On the one hand, an angry father, whom she loved, a mother whom she loved better, a safe home, and in it all that her simple heart desired; on the other, the great and terrible world, the armies of rough men, the dissolute courtiers, the long journeys over an unknown country, for one who had hardly stirred out of sight of Domrémy church tower. Love of home, so strong in the hearts of all women, so precious to the peasant woman of France above all others, must be renounced for love of country. There have been no better or more determined patriots than women, as Cæsar found when the women of Gaul cheered their husbands on to the contest with his legions; but these women were fighting at home, as it were upon the threshold; they did not go forth to lead armies in offensive warfare; theirs was

the steady courage of desperation, not the active courage which must sustain itself, keep its own fires alive, instead of relying upon the stimulus of impulse and a desperate crisis. All the fears and heartbreakings of the struggle in Jeanne's mind have been hidden from us, for she speaks not of them; having fought out this battle with herself and decided that France needs her more than does her mother, she does not allow herself to turn back, and we get but a plaintive reminiscence here and there, since she has locked up this grief in her heart.

The opportunity to attempt the execution of the commands imposed by her voices was long in coming; she had become a subject of common talk in her village; everywhere she met discouraging incredulity, if not ridicule. It was not that there was lack of belief in marvels, for the land was filled with stories of portents and wonders in which the people did not hesitate to believe. There was the holy peasant whom the great captain, Xaintrailles, brought before the court to display upon his hands and feet the very marks of the cross, the stigmata, and who was said to sweat blood upon the day of the Passion. There was Catherine de la Rochelle, who saw visions of angels and who proclaimed herself commissioned to discover treasures for the dauphin. In these and the like the people of Domrémy may have believed; but not in their own little peasant girl; for had they not known her when she was but like the rest, a simple shepherdess?

In one member of her family Jeanne found faith, and to him she turned for help. This was her uncle, whose wife she was sent to nurse and whose spark of faith she kindled during this stay till, what with her urging and that of his wife, the good man went to Vaucouleurs and carried Jeanne's message to Baudricourt. Is it any wonder that the seigneur smiled derisively at this foolish peasant who

came to him with a message from a girl declaring that he must give her soldiers to accomplish that which the best captains of France could not accomplish? He was not unduly harsh, merely contemptuous in his rebuff: "Whip the girl well, and send her home to her father." There are so many with "missions" in this world, missions that are but vain imaginings, profiting naught; the more experience one has had in the world the more one learns to distrust these missions; and beyond a doubt the chastisement suggested by the Sire de Baudricourt would, in nine cases out of ten, have ended the mission and cured the hysterical enthusiast.

We say nine cases out of ten, or ninety-nine out of a hundred, or any further multiples you please, with careless assurance that there is no tenth case, and that fate will not take our wager and prove us fools, no matter what the odds we offer. But there is that tenth case, and the world is caught, the wise world, as here in the case of the peasant lass of Lorraine, at whom all in Domrémy smiled indulgently, whom all in France were soon to worship.

It was the month of February, 1429, when the eyes of all France were fixed upon one city, Orléans. To the shattered French party it was the last hope of their dauphin; to the English it was the barrier which shut them off from the south of France. Since October the siege had been in progress, and England had given the command of her besieging forces to the best captains, while Dunois held out for France and for his half-brother, that Charles d'Orléans who had been a prisoner in England ever since Agincourt. But neither the skill of Dunois nor the gay courage of the citizens could cope with famine; it looked as if Orléans must fall, and all France mourned in advance the fate of the gallant city. Charles, the dauphin,

wept at Chinon, and was without hope or counsel. In the heart of the daughter of Domrémy one fervent prayer replaced all others: that Orléans might be saved! Her voices grew more and more importunate, crying to her ceaselessly that it was for her to save Orléans. With this more definite and immediate aim in mind she found courage to make another appeal to Baudricourt. She persuaded her uncle to accompany her, and the two trudged on foot to Vaucouleurs, where Jeanne was lodged with a wheelwright, her mother's cousin.

Impatient at the persistence of this mad girl, Baudricourt nevertheless consented to see her, probably thinking that he would thus more easily rid himself of her. In her simple peasant's dress of red cloth the young mystic stood before him. She was not tall, but was well proportioned and sturdy; in her features there was nothing remarkable, merely a regularity that failed of absolute beauty by being commonplace; still, it was a comely face, and even the sceptic Baudricourt could not fail to note the honesty and gentleness of the expression, or the deep and dreamy eyes, the sole feature that revealed some gleams of the great spirit within. Without hesitation or embarrassment and yet without effrontery she answered his questions, and uttered her message to the dauphin: "My lord, I come to you in the name of God, bidding you enjoin the dauphin to hold firm and to set no day of battle with the enemy at this time, for God will send him aid about Mid-Lent. The kingdom is not his alone, but God's. Nevertheless, the Lord meaneth that he shall be King, despite his enemies; and it is I who shall lead him to be crowned at Rheims."

Baudricourt could not surrender at once to the faint belief aroused in him by Jeanne's earnestness, but the faint belief was already there, and he dismissed her kindly

to reflect upon what she had said. The *curé* of the parish was called into consultation, and the knight and the priest agreed that it was quite possible that Satan might have a hand in all this, and the two visited Jeanne, the priest exorcising the evil spirit, whereat Jeanne did not fly away or disappear with a flash and a bad smell of powder and brimstone. Her simple piety satisfied and touched the priest.

Meanwhile, rumors of her wonderful visions and of her sanctity began to be current among the people and to find credence. Had it not been prophesied by the mighty Merlin that France should be lost through a wicked woman and saved by a pure virgin? Who could the wicked woman be other than Isabeau de Bavière, who had sold France and disinherited and denied her own son? And here was Jeanne, a pure child, come to redeem France. It was criminal in Baudricourt to doubt, to reject the assistance thus sent by God himself. Crowds of people, gentles and mere laborers, visited Jeanne, and all were sure of one thing at least, that she was a good girl, while many went away firm believers in her mission. A gentleman, Jean de Metz, thinking to jest with her, said: "Well, sweetheart, then we must all turn English, since the King will be driven out of France." But there was no thought of jest in her, as she complained of Baudricourt's refusal to send her to the dauphin: "And yet they must get me to the Dauphin before Mid-Lent, were I to wear out my legs to the knees walking there. For no one in this world, kings, nor dukes, nor daughter of the king of Scotland, can win back the kingdom of France; and there is for him no other help save in me, albeit I should far rather stay beside my poor mother and spin. . . . For this is not my work, fighting battles; but I needs must go to do that which is commanded, for my Lord so wills it."

Baudricourt hesitated to assume the responsibility of any action in the matter. He took Jeanne to see the old Duke de Lorraine, his feudal superior. Duke Charles, at that time under the domination of a mistress, Alison du May, of great wit and beauty, was ill, and thought the miraculous maiden of Domrémy might restore him to health and the arms of Alison. Jeanne, very wisely and frankly, told him to put away his paramour and take back his wife and lead a decent life. She was no worker of vulgar miracles to profit a worn-out old *roué*.

Coming back to Vaucouleurs, she found the authorities more ready to give her a hearing, for the situation in Orléans had become desperate, and the gallant citizens, who had entered into the siege with as much eagerness as if it had been but play, found enthusiasm very exhausting and food supplies very scant. Jeanne had predicted the date and the disastrous result of the battle of Rouvray, "the battle of the Herrings" (February 12, 1429), and the people of Vaucouleurs believed in her. Grudgingly and half-heartedly, the Sire de Baudricourt was compelled to yield to her request and to despatch her to the dauphin. Some citizens of the town subscribed a sum to equip her with horse and armor, and the Sire de Baudricourt himself gave her a sword. For the long journey through a rough country the poor girl, with no woman companion, could not retain her simple gown, but must be dressed as a man-at-arms. On the very eve of her departure, she was subjected to another severe trial to her feelings: her parents, hearing of her determination, sent to implore, to command, her not to go; and Jeanne, unable to write, had to dictate a letter asking their forgiveness for her disobedience.

Her little troop, consisting of two gentlemen and a few men of their following, had to traverse part of the country

where the Burgundian interest was strong, for the dauphin was then holding his court at Chinon, near Tours. And the dangers of the road infested by hostile troops were not the only dangers, for among her own companions there were many misgivings: they knew not whether to reverence her as a saint or to destroy her as a witch. The latter course, indeed, they were very near pursuing; but the innocence and the harmless, hopeful, confident demeanor of the girl moved their hearts to pity.

She arrived at Chinon on February 24th, and sent word to Charles that she had much to tell him that would comfort his heart, and that she had come one hundred and fifty leagues to see him; but Charles had no will of his own, and his councillors wrangled about what should be done. There was a strong party opposed to Jeanne, but her friends, headed by Queen Yolande, carried the day, and she was admitted to see the king, or, as she continued to call him until after the consecration at Rheims, the dauphin. The story of how this country maiden was introduced into the throng of dazzling courtiers and left to divine which was the chosen of the Lord has been too often told, and too generally credited, to need either retelling or defence; the whole story of Jeanne d'Arc is so little short of what we would call miraculous that it seems a petty thing to balk at this one detail. Whether by divine inspiration, or by mere luck, or by the friendly and secret guidance of her followers, Jeanne did discover Charles, and spoke without fear as she knelt at the feet of this unworthy prince whom she had come so far to save: "Gentle Dauphin, I am called Jeanne la Pucelle; the King of Heaven sends you word by me that you shall be consecrated and crowned in the city of Rheims, and that you shall be his lieutenant in France. Give me, therefore, soldiers, that I may raise the siege of Orléans

and take you to Rheims to be consecrated. It is God's will that your enemies, the English, shall go back to their own land; and woe be unto them if they do not go; for the kingdom shall be and remain your own."

The dauphin could but be struck by these words, uttered with such directness and earnestness; but he still doubted of the divine mission of the peasant girl. Might she not be an impostor, hired by his enemies? Might she not be, if nothing worse, merely a poor demented creature? His mind had been much tormented by doubts of his own legitimacy. The English openly proclaimed him no son of Charles VI.; his mother's intimacy with Orléans was too notorious and too recent a scandal to be concealed, and he had been born at the very moment when that intimacy was at its height, while she who was his mother had acted as if there were good reason why he should not inherit the crown; is it any wonder that the wretched young prince himself half believed the allegations of his foes? He desired reassurance on this point, and it was doubtless to ask some question of the kind that he now led Jeanne d'Arc aside and seemed to converse with her in low tones. All that passed between them has never been told, since Jeanne refused to reveal it; but the courtiers saw his countenance light up, and it was known that she had told him good news, and this much she confessed to having said: "I am sent from God to assure you that you are the true heir of France, the son of the King."

The dauphin may have been momentarily converted to faith in Jeanne la Pucelle; but he was vacillating, and some of his wisest councillors, including the chancellor, would not believe in her. She must first be proved no witch and a pure virgin. To both these tests Jeanne submitted willingly and courageously, and from both she came

out vindicated. As they prepared to take her to Poitiers, where some half dozen learned doctors of the church were to focus their wisdom upon this poor child, she said: "Well do I see that many a hard trial awaits me in Poitiers; but God will aid me. Let us go, then, with stout hearts." During the interrogation to which she was subjected by the theologians, the one dominant characteristic of the girl —not of the saint—was strongly brought out: her common sense. Her answers, though naïve and utterly unsophisticated, by their frankness and good sense frequently discomfited the most adroit catechists. One of the doctors objected: "If God wishes to deliver the people of France he has no need of men-at-arms." With readiness and rational, half-humorous shrewdness, Jeanne replied: "Ah! my God! the men-at-arms will fight, and God will give the victory." Then Brother Seguin, "a very sour man," with a strong twang of his native Limoges, would fain know "what tongue these Heavenly visitors spoke?" "A better than thine," replied Jeanne. "I did not come to show signs or work miracles in Poitiers; the sign I shall give you will be to raise the siege of Orléans. Give me soldiers, few or many, and I will go."

Confident of coming out scathless from the examination of the doctors, Jeanne grew weary of the long delay and dictated a letter to the English regent, Bedford, announcing to him that "the Maid has come from God to drive you out of France." Finally, the representatives of the Church gave it as their opinion that it would be lawful to employ this maid, if in very truth she were a maid, "for the hand of God works in mysterious ways!" Her purity of life and of body were more easily established than her orthodoxy, and now there remained nothing but to grant her prayer and let her march on to Orléans. For Orléans, too, had heard of its advocate, and the gallant

Dunois sent entreaty after entreaty that they would send the maid to him.

A little retinue was provided as her personal escort, under command of a staunch and staid old knight, Jean Daulon, with a page, two heralds, a steward, two valets, and Jeanne's brother, Pierre d'Arc. Clothed in pure white armor—white as symbolizing the purity of the heroine—and mounted upon her black horse, glorious must have been the sight of the sweet maid, a very *sursum corda* to every loyal heart in France. One can see through the mists of years the seraphic smile of tender triumph with which she looked up at her banner, the holy banner that was of white with *fleurs-de-lis* upon it, and on one side the Lord of Hosts Himself, with angels by His side, holding the world in His hands. And then she waved aloft the sacred sword of Saint Catherine with its five crosses, which she had discovered hid behind the altar of Saint Catherine de Fierbois; the word was at last: "On to Orléans!"

No greater contrast could have been than that here set before the eyes of wondering France: on the one hand, the chaste, kindly, simple-hearted Jeanne; on the other, leaders and soldiers brutalized by long years of desultory civil war. Think of a Sire de Giac, who gave poison to his wife and then, setting her astride a horse, made her gallop till she died. When he was brought to justice he prayed that his right hand, vowed to the service of the devil, might be cut off before his execution, lest the astute ruler of Hades seize the said hand and drag the whole body along with it. Or think, again, of Gilles de Retz, the Marquis de Laval, whose murders of children (to the number of one hundred and sixty, some say) were so atrocious that he was at last seized, tried, condemned to death at the stake and to eternal, if mistaken, association with that

nursery horror, Bluebeard. Think of him riding beside Jeanne la Pucelle, nay, standing beside her at the coronation in Rheims and fetching the sacred ampulla! What an associate for her was even that brave and loyal friend Etienne Vignoles, nicknamed Lahire (the Barker), who was wont to say, in extenuation of the universal practice of plundering and brigandage among the so-called soldiers, "Were God to turn man-at-arms, He too would pillage!" It was he who prayed before a battle, with less reverence but surely not with less fervency than some other pious soldiers: *Sire Dieu, je te prie de faire pour Lahire ce que Lahire ferait pour toi, si tu étais capitaine et si Lahire était Dieu* [Sir God, I pray thee to do for Lahire what Lahire would do for thee, if thou wert a soldier and Lahire were God]. It is a most excellent and comprehensive prayer, good to prefer when one has not time to remind the Deity of each little thing He should do.

With an army composed of such men, Jeanne d'Arc set out for Orléans; but she sadly doubted if her saints would be coadjutors to such unrepentant sinners. Accordingly, she insisted that the morals of the camp be reformed. Lahire must swear no more dreadful, soul-blasting oaths; he obeyed, but the good-hearted girl, seeing him at a loss for unseasoned speech, relented so far as to permit him to swear "by his baton." But the reform did not end with puerile matters; the Pucelle would have no loose women about the camp; all her soldiers must go humbly and confess their sins before they dared to follow her sacred banner; in the open air upon the banks of the Loire she raised an altar, and all must take communion with her. No need of the dauphin's order to Dunois, Xaintrailles, Lahire, Boussac, and the other captains to respect the person and obey the commands of Jeanne la Pucelle; the enthusiasm inspired by her innocent face, the patriotism of her

unselfish heart, that mysterious power which, sometimes and only sometimes, the good and pure and utterly defenseless exert upon evil natures—these were far stronger motives than the commands of a prince so weak that he could not maintain his own in half of France. It was a crusade upon which this fair young saint was leading them; and something of the old ardor of the crusaders inspired her followers.

Chapter XIII

The Triumph and Martyrdom of Jeanne d'Arc

XIII

THE TRIUMPH AND MARTYRDOM OF JEANNE D'ARC

WHILE the army of Jeanne d'Arc, starting with but four or five thousand men and gathering numbers from every side as it goes, is marching toward Orléans, let us look at the military situation of that town and of the English cause in France. To begin with, the force of the besiegers had never been large; during the long siege it had been reduced by disease, by loss in battle, by defections, till the English army itself was almost in as great straits as the garrison. Moreover, in order to secure themselves, the English had constructed a dozen or more small forts, or *bastilles,* on both sides of the Loire, and the garrisons of these places had no sure means of intercommunication. It is true that plans were on foot for reinforcing the besiegers, but the political conditions in France and England were such as very seriously to handicap Bedford. There was never hearty coöperation between him and the all-powerful Cardinal Winchester; the Duke of Gloucester was wrangling with Winchester, and had not long ago seriously offended Bedford's most important ally, Philippe de Bourgogne, by marrying Jacqueline of Flanders and espousing her cause against the Burgundians. Though Gloucester had since married another lady—bigamy was but a small matter—and had patched up matters with

Philippe de Bourgogne, the latter was showing distinct signs of estrangement from the English. Much depended therefore on the successful termination of the siege of Orléans, and the English power, apparently at its climax, needed but a slight check to start it on the decline.

All this must lead us to ponder upon the achievements of that force now collected under the white banner of Jeanne, and to ask ourselves, were those achievements indeed so marvellous, from a military point of view? When the chemist has evaporated his solution of a salt almost to the point of crystallization, and yet it will not crystallize, a mere splinter cast into the dish will suddenly gather to itself the hesitating particles, and the crystals form as if by magic. The figure will help us to understand the condition of the dauphin's cause and the kind of influence exerted by Jeanne d'Arc. She was the nucleus, lacking which the French forces might have continued mere floating and helpless bands, without a leader, without a common cause; above all, without hope or enthusiasm. There was no lack of valiant soldiers on the side of the dauphin, —the Constable de Richemont, Dunois, Xaintrailles, Lahire, Gilles de Retz, Armagnac; all these were either in Jeanne's army or in Orléans. It was her presence, her influence, that enabled them to combine successfully. She was essential to them, no doubt; but had she herself not said wisely and well: "The men-at-arms will fight, and God will give the victory"?

The captains of the dauphin's army thoroughly appreciated the value, the inestimable value, of the enthusiasm aroused by the Maid, and they made shrewd use of it; but they had no intention of trusting the whole campaign to spiritual direction, whether of saints or devils; and some of them were not a little inclined to view Jeanne as hardly better than a witch. It might have been better for France

had they trusted to the guidance of the heroine. She would have marched up to Orléans on the side of the river held most strongly by the English and have defied them, be the risk what it might. By a deception she was led to cross the Loire, and was indignant when, on reaching Orléans, she discovered that the river lay between her and the town.

Dunois, commander-in-chief in Orléans, seeing her from the ramparts, crossed the river at once and came to give her reverent and joyful greeting. After reproaching him and the other captains for placing more reliance upon human prudence than upon Divine behests, she said: "I bring you the best succor that ever knight or city had; it is the succor of the King of Heaven, and comes not from me, but from God." It was the 29th of April, and that same evening, at eight o'clock, Jeanne entered Orléans with provisions and an escort, the main body of the army retiring to Blois to cross the Loire.

Orléans went mad with joy at the advent of its heaven-sent deliverer. As she rode through the streets the crowds blocked her way, and eager admirers rudely jostled each other in the struggle but to touch the horse that bore her. With sweet kindliness, she thanked them, losing none of her humility, and exhorting them to thank not her, but God and the dauphin. For that night and the rest of her stay in Orléans she was lodged with the wife of the treasurer of Charles d'Orléans, and slept with one of the daughters of the house. Sturdy and healthy as she was, the unaccustomed rough life of the camp, sleeping with her armor on and none but men about her, had occasioned her great fatigue.

The operations of the siege had been suspended by the English, who sullenly kept to their *bastilles*. Jeanne insisted upon an immediate attack, and during the week

that followed she was with difficulty restrained from rash enterprises. Indeed, she could not always be restrained, and her rashness was not infrequently rewarded with unexpected success. Warned of the approach of English reinforcements under Sir John Fastolf, she conjured Dunois to let her know without delay of his coming. She suspected Dunois of intending to engage Fastolf without her, and in her nervous eagerness to be up and doing for France she precipitated a successful attack upon the bastilles. She had retired to rest for a few hours in the middle of the day when the noise of a tumult in the streets aroused her; the cry was that the French were being slaughtered at one of the gates. Leaping from her couch, and hardly taking time to have half of her armor buckled on, she mounted her horse and, seizing her banner as it was reached to her from a window, galloped toward the gates. On the way, she met the wounded and her heart was moved at the sight of blood. Without the authority of Dunois the garrison had undertaken an assault upon the *bastille* of Saint-Loup, which stood most directly across the path of those who would bring supplies into Orléans. The French had been beaten back, but with the arrival of Jeanne hope and courage returned. Jeanne in person led a fresh assault, while Talbot, the English commander, vainly strove to rally his men and dissipate their fears of "the witch." The English were forced to retire, and the fort fell into the hands of Jeanne, who, lapsing at once from warrior into woman after this first experience of an actual battle, wept over the slain, cared for the wounded, and did her best to protect the English prisoners from her own savage followers.

The military success was not great, but the mere fact of success in this first active enterprise enhanced Jeanne's credit in the eyes of her own party. Nevertheless, the

military chiefs hesitated to trust her,—perhaps because they were jealous of her; and while she was spending Ascension day in fasting and prayer they held a council at which it was determined to attack the principal English fort under cover of a feint upon one on the other side of Orléans. She was told only of the feigned attack, but Dunois later confessed the truth, refusing, however, to allow her to proceed to the assault in person. As she watched the battle from afar, saw the French carry and burn one fort, and then saw them repulsed from before another, her impatience could no longer be restrained. Crossing the river with a few followers, she rallied her people, who followed her charmed standard and captured the fort, which Jeanne fired with her own hand.

Once more the wisdom or the expediency of her seemingly rash counsels had been vindicated; but still the leaders hesitated, and determined to await reinforcements before attacking the fort of Les Tournelles, in which the English had now concentrated a considerable part of their forces. "Nay," said Jeanne, "you have been at your councils, but I have been at mine. Know that the counsel of my King and Lord shall prevail over yours." She ordered her chaplain to be ready to attend her at break of day: "For I shall have much to do, more than I have done any day yet. Blood shall issue from my body, for I shall be wounded." With the English daily awaiting reinforcements, it is difficult to comprehend what could have induced experienced military leaders to meditate delay instead of pursuing the advantage already gained; yet they shut the gates next morning to keep Jeanne in, and her host, Milet, begged her to remain quietly to sup with him. "Keep your supper," she said; "I shall bring back some *Goddems* to eat it with us." The national oath, which Figaro was to consider sufficient for all conversation

in English, was manifestly familiar and characteristic three centuries before his time.

In spite of the orders of their chiefs the men-at-arms followed their idol, forced the gates, and charged upon the English fort. As the sun rose over the Loire the desperate struggle began, the English defending themselves with determination and driving back column after column till the dead and wounded lay in heaps beneath the walls of Les Tournelles. Sword in hand, La Pucelle placed a ladder against the wall, and as she mounted an arrow pierced her shoulder. As she fell fainting to the earth the English sallied forth to capture her, but she was rescued by the Sire de Gamaches, who had been one of those who refused to serve as a captain in an army dominated by "a mere girl, who may have been God knows what." Though sceptical of her mission, he was a gallant soldier, and succeeded in removing the wounded heroine to a place of safety.

If the pain of the wound and the sight of her own blood had unnerved Jeanne, the spectacle of their wounded deliverer completely demoralized her soldiers. They pressed about her offering to dress the wound, to remove the arrow, to charm away the pain by magic incantations. She would have none of the works of Satan for her healing. Praying to her saints for strength, she rallied her courage, pulled the arrow out with her own hands, and had the wound dressed with oil. It was nearly dark, and the captains were for retiring, but Jeanne's spirits inspired her to continue the fight. The Sire de Daulon, her knight, rushed back to the fosse of the fort to recover the sacred banner, dropped there in the confusion of the fray. As he raised it to the breeze its folds were opened, and the disheartened French soldiers charged again. "If my banner but touch the walls," said Jeanne, "the fort

JEANNE D'ARC

After the painting by Jean J. Scherrer

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will fall." Wounded as she was, she mounted her horse and rode toward the fort. Panic seized the English at what seemed to them a miraculous restoration to life of one whom they thought dead, and their excited imaginations saw the heavenly hosts, led by Michael, fighting on the French side. Attempting a hurried evacuation, the English captain, Glasdale, was precipitated into the Loire from a frail bridge on which he was crossing; the fort was taken, and the remnant of its defenders put to the sword.

The last of the English defences south of the Loire was destroyed, and the next day, May 8, 1429, Talbot and Suffolk led their army in retreat. As it was Sunday, Jeanne let them depart unmolested, but ere the last of the English columns had disappeared an altar was raised in the plain and the holy maid was joined by her army and by the people of Orléans in a Mass to celebrate their deliverance.

It had taken nine days only for this courageous and resolute girl to undo months of work on the part of the English. Her steadfast faith in herself, her refusal to be turned aside from her duty, had worked the miracle; and for it all she thanked God, and prayed for support in what yet remained to do. To France, indeed, she seemed a miracle herself; and learned doctors of the Church undertook to prove, forsooth, that what she had done was of God, not of the devil, while Frenchmen who had held aloof from the despised and discredited heir of France began to ask themselves whether, after all, he were not the lawful ruler of France, since God had sent this inspired leader of his armies.

Sweet is the savor of triumph; to all who are touched with ambition the mere joy of victory, with the homage of men and the flattery that follow in the train of victory, is so sweet that in vainglory they forget what yet remains

to be done. But in Jeanne there was no ambition; she rejoiced and gave thanks to God that through her he had saved Orléans; but the glory was God's, not hers. Orléans, too, was but the first stage in her career, of whose brief duration she warned her friends, and of whose tragic end her earnest heart may already have had some forebodings. "You must use me quickly," she said, "for I shall last but one year." In that brief year there was much to be accomplished: yet for long she was compelled to rest, or to fret, while timid or selfish advisers held back the dauphin from granting her prayer to be allowed to march at once to Rheims. With practically all the intervening country in the hands of the English, such a march seemed the extreme of folly. It would be risking too much for the empty ceremony of consecrating the dauphin at Rheims. But to Jeanne that consecration was the one thing needed to complete her share in the rehabilitation of France, the one thing which her celestial guardians now insisted on her undertaking, and for which they promised her their support. Moreover, the English were already demoralized, filled with fear of this "witch," for whom they had nothing but words of contempt that only veneered their hearty dread of her. Whether witch or mere woman, they feared the influence of this Jeanne upon French imagination; and as aliens in the land, they exaggerated the danger of a sudden wave of national feeling that would sweep them from France, while they saw disaffection on all sides. All this the French captains could not, of course, have known; but they should have appreciated the importance of following up the advantage won at Orléans and of using the enthusiasm kindled by La Pucelle before there should be time for it to cool. It was only after much wrangling, and fresh ecclesiastical debate as to the sources of her inspiration, that

Jeanne's counsel at length prevailed and she was allowed to set out for Rheims.

Before this decision was reached, however, other victories had come to crown Jeanne's banner and to make the approach to Rheims less of a military hazard. Suffolk had retired to Jargeau, on the Loire, and this place must be reduced before the French could venture northward. Jeanne led in the assault, and narrowly missed death from a huge stone that crushed her helmet. Nevertheless, Jargeau fell, and Suffolk himself was among the prisoners. De Richemont and his Bretons came to join the forces of the dauphin, and they went in search of the second English army, under Talbot and Fastolf, encamped no one knew where in that Beauce which the war had rendered almost a desert. As the French army moved cautiously forward in the wilderness, the vanguard started a deer, which ran straight into the English lines. Warned of their presence by the cries of the English soldiers, the French were enabled to come upon them suddenly, and the bloody victory of Patay (June 18th) was won: two thousand Englishmen were left dead upon the field and Talbot was carried off a prisoner.

No longer could the enthusiasm of her followers be quelled; and though old captains shook their heads, the dauphin and the court were forced to yield to the popular clamor for an immediate attempt to reach Rheims. Marching around Paris by way of Auxerre, only Troyes blocked the way, and its garrison, panic-struck, evacuated the town after a show of resistance. On July 9th Charles entered Troyes, where, with characteristic selfishness, he would have let the English march away with their prisoners but for the intervention of Jeanne. Less than a week later he entered Rheims in triumph, with Jeanne beside him. She it was, we would fain think, whom the people

welcomed with transports of joy, not the dauphin whom she was to make a king. Well might the people crowd about her, hold up their infants for her to bless, and beg but to touch the hem of her garment; for kings in plenty shall the earth know, while there may be but one Jeanne d'Arc. On July 17th Jeanne stood in the cathedral, with her blessed banner, while the ancient ceremonies of the consecration were performed, and the dauphin, now anointed from the sacred *ampulla*, was King of France in name and in right, let the English proclaim Henry VI. as they would.

In that gathering of the nobles and chief priests of France what one was there who considered the ceremony with such unselfish purity of heart as this peasant girl of Lorraine! To some it was merely an idle spectacle, a court function like another; to some it was a political event full of promise, from which they themselves might hope for advantages more or less selfish; to Jeanne d'Arc it was the sacred fulfilment of that which God had promised her. Her task was completed now; how gladly would she have left the scene, without a thought of worldly advancement, content to have been Jeanne la Pucelle, through whom France was to be saved, content to be once more merely Jeanne the shepherdess.

When the crown was placed on the dauphin's head Jeanne knelt before him, and wept as she embraced his knees. "O gentle king," she said, "now is fulfilled the will of God, who was pleased that I should raise the siege of Orléans and should bring you to your city of Rheims to be crowned and anointed, in proof that you are true king and rightful possessor of the realm of France." She herself felt that her mission was accomplished, and besought the king to allow her to return to her home, "to my father and mother, to keep their sheep for them, as was my

wont." But Jeanne was too useful to be allowed to retire, and though she no longer heard the call of her divine monitors Charles insisted on her remaining to help him to win back his kingdom; but "all that was to be done she had now accomplished; what remained was—to suffer."

As she rode through the streets of Rheims she exclaimed: "O why can I not die here!" "And where, then, will you die?" asked the archbishop. "I know not; it will be where God pleases. I have done what my Lord commanded me to do. Now I would that it might please Him to send me back to keep my sheep with my sister and my mother." Her courage was as high as ever, the brave heart faltered not, but it was no longer inspired. "She began to hear those voices, no longer from heaven, but from the hearth, those voices that vainly call disheartened man, sick of ambition and glory, to the home of his earliest affections, to the humble occupations of his childhood, to the obscurity of his early days." Hearken to those voices, Jeanne, and strive no longer to awaken faint echoes of thy heavenly voices:

> "The oracles are dumb, . . .
> No nightly trance or breathèd spell
> Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell."

This portion of Jeanne's life has always seemed to me the most pitiful, the period when "her God had forsaken her," when her heart warned her that her divine task was done, and when yet that heart yearned to do more for France. In the hour of supreme trial strength came to her with the thought that her suffering was the will of God; but now what was the will of God? In vain she prayed for guidance; there was nothing but the timidity and the yearning for rest of this girlish heart on the one hand, and the pleading of the king and the courtiers on the

other. It was not to be expected that Jeanne, always willing to sacrifice herself, should do anything else than consent still to be, as she had been for three glorious months, the leader of France, the bodily representative of national feeling. With or without inspiration, she could serve.

Disaster followed upon disaster in her brief subsequent career; but always she was the same honest, hopeful, pure girl, striving her utmost to discipline her army, to restrain the cruelty of her soldiers, to win for the dauphin a reconciliation with his cousin of Burgundy. Some of her biographers have noted, or pretended to note, a lamentable change in her character at this time. It is said that she became less scrupulous of shedding blood, less careful in enforcing moral and religious discipline among her followers, above all, less gentle and patient in temper. But Jeanne had never been able to compel absolute obedience from soldiers little better than banditti, and when the notion of her sanctity began to fade away as the men saw her in the daily life of the camp, and saw her a mere human creature, fallible like themselves, her strongest hold on them was loosened. She had never been, since her mission was assumed, a mere dainty, meek, unresisting heroine of romance, a paragon of grace and beauty for whom knights risked their lives while she sat by and smiled and dressed the wounds of the victor after the fight. She had definitely and from the first taken an active part in the real business of fighting, had on more than one occasion displayed her prowess in the field. A generation after her death, when all France had come to regard her as a martyr, a priest testified that "she would not use her sword, nor would she slay anyone"; but this testimony is certainly at variance with all that we know of the actual behavior of Jeanne in battle, and seems sufficiently contradicted by her own statement that the sword

she used at Compiègne was "excellent, either for cutting or thrusting." She made the statement frankly, without any suspicion of its apparent inconsistency with her professions of a divine mission. We have no doubt that Jeanne delivered many a good stroke in deadly earnest, and we do not respect her the less for it. We need not even sorrow, but rather rejoice, at that display of honest indignation against the unruly and immoral in her camp, when she broke her sword of Saint Catherine over one rascal's head.

Town after town had thrown open its gates at sight of the white banner and the Maid of Orléans; but Paris still remained in the hands of the English. Jeanne was averse to making any attack upon Paris; her heart misgave her, but she yielded to the will of the king. The assault that followed (September 8, 1429), in which she behaved with desperate but hopeless courage, fighting on in spite of a severe wound, resulted in a disastrous repulse, the French losing heavily. Jeanne, who had opposed making the attack, was nevertheless held responsible for the result. Faith in her was rudely shaken, and even those courtiers who had fawned upon her now said that her impiety—they, of course, were qualified to pronounce upon such a point—had been fitly rebuked in this defeat: had she not ventured to deliver the assault upon the anniversary of the Nativity of Our Lady? "The Armagnacs," says the journal of a pious citizen of Paris, "were so filled with wickedness and unbelief, that, on the word of a creature in the shape of a woman with them, called La Pucelle (what it might be God alone knows!), they conspired on the anniversary of the Nativity of Our Lady . . . to attack Paris."

Jeanne, utterly disheartened by her defeat, and half believing that she had merited this rebuke from heaven,

humbled herself before God and before the king, and renounced her arms, laying her sword upon the altar of Saint-Denis. But though willing to shift the blame for failures upon her, Charles was not willing to dispense with her services if there was anything more to be hoped from them. She was induced to take up arms again; but we will pass over in silence the details of her later valiant but hopeless service and speak only of her last feat of arms.

The Burgundians, though their duke was already in secret correspondence with Charles, had laid siege to Compiègne. Jeanne, with a small body of troops succeeded in forcing her way into the town, and that same day (May 23, 1430) led a sortie that at first drove back the besiegers. The Burgundians rallied, however, and Jeanne's troops were beaten back into the town. As she herself, bringing up the rear in the retreat, turned to drive back a band of the pursuers that her troops might reach the gates in safety, she was left alone; and the drawbridge of Compiègne rose, cutting her off from rescue or from escape. Surrender, Jeanne, there is no hope for thee; France is weary of thee; for hast thou not done all that France could hope from thee? Jeanne herself had said that she feared nothing but treachery. Whatever the immediate motive of those who raised the drawbridge at Compiègne, whether they were bribed by the Burgundians or merely exasperated because the heroine had not performed miracles, the act was clear treachery, and the pitiful little moat of this town was the impassable barrier that shut Jeanne d'Arc out of that France she had saved.

An archer of Picardy was her immediate captor, and he delivered her, for a price, to his commander, Jean de Luxembourg. A great prize was this witch who had all but ruined the English cause in France, and proud must have been her captor: his prisoner was a girl of eighteen.

But had she not fallen into good hands? Jean de Luxembourg was not only a member of one of the most distinguished families of Europe, but he was a knight, a leader in that grand organization of chivalry whose first object and proudest boast was protection of the weak, and gentleness and courtesy toward women. As Michelet remarks: "It was a hard trial for the chivalry of the day." The age of chivalry was already gone, though the name was on the lips of all: chivalry, even if it could have withstood the phenomenal progress in the condition of the lower orders of society,—have we not said that the peasant brothers of Jeanne were ennobled by royal letters patent?—and the invention of firearms, which tended to equalize all men on the field of battle, could not have withstood the debasing influence of years of guerrilla warfare. The knight had not only lost his physical superiority on the battlefield, but he had lost something infinitely more precious—his lofty ideals. Knightly orders continued to be founded, but they were the amusements of dilettanti in honor and ancient custom. Furthermore, even had chivalry not faded from its theoretic brilliancy, it is entirely possible that Jeanne would have been deemed beyond the pale of its protection. As the leper was shunned, as the Jewish usurer was persecuted by mediæval society, so was the witch outlawed by public sentiment; and it was as a witch that the English were resolved to treat the deliverer of Orléans.

Confined at first in the camp at Margny, near Compiègne, Jeanne was subsequently removed to the Château de Beaulieu, near Loches, the very place from which Agnès Sorel took her title of Dame de Beaulieu. The Maid was removed again to Beaurevoir, and it is pleasant to record the kindly sympathy displayed by the ladies of Jean de Luxembourg's family, who ministered to her comfort, provided

her with women's clothes, and did whatever charity suggested to calm her distressed mind. But nothing could reconcile Jeanne to captivity; she felt that she was in danger of falling into the hands of the English, and she yearned for an opportunity to succor Compiègne. In one of her attempted escapes she threw herself from a high tower, though her conscience warned her against the sin of self-destruction. Hurt in the fall, she was unable to make good her escape, and was taken and nursed back to health by the ladies of Luxembourg.

Meanwhile, the great ones of the earth were haggling over the price which should be paid for their victim, and Charles VII. made no effort to save her. Jean de Luxembourg sold her to Philippe de Bourgogne, and he treated with the English representative. This representative has had heaped upon his head the contemptuous anathemas of historians, both French and English; nor is he undeserving of the most severe phrases yet coined to express reprobation. Pierre Cauchon—it is a wonder so few have thought of the swinish suggestiveness of the very name—was merely a time-serving priest whose shameless policy of intrigue had already got him made Bishop of Beauvais, and would soon, he fondly hoped, give him the archbishopric of Rouen. In furtherance of his ambitious projects he had become thoroughly English, and fawned upon the rich Cardinal Winchester; but though Winchester nominated him to the archbishopric, neither the Pope nor the cathedral chapter of Rouen would consent to receive him as archbishop. Cauchon, as Bishop of Beauvais, claimed the right to try the heretical sorceress who had been captured on the borders of the diocese. In the same document in which he preferred this claim he made offers, on behalf of the English, to buy his victim. A king's ransom, ten thousand livres in gold, was offered for Jeanne, and as

refusal would have involved not only the loss of this sum, but the loss of English friendship, the Duke of Burgundy sold his captive, who was delivered up to the ecclesiastical authorities and the English party in November, 1430.

Under the barbarous customs then in vogue it would not have been impossible for the English to put her to death under military law; the inviolability of prisoners of war was by no means an established principle among the nations. But La Pucelle's death alone would not suffice; she must first be discredited in the eyes of the world; it must be shown that the consecration of Charles VII. had been effected with the aid of one condemned by the laws of God and of the Church, that the consecration was, in fact, but an impious mockery of religious rites, because a sorceress had led him to the altar. For this reason it was determined to deliver Jeanne to the mercies of the ecclesiastical courts. Cauchon was rector of the University of Paris, and could command the assent of that body to whatever seemed to him expedient; the representative of the Inquisition, who seemed decidedly averse to having anything to do with the proceedings, was likewise overawed by Cauchon and by the English cardinal. All that remained to do was to constitute the court and to bring the accused before it for trial.

Rouen was to be the scene of the trial, and here Cauchon began his proceedings early in January, 1431. The charge against Jeanne was to be the working of magic; but the acute and punctilious Norman lawyers picked so many flaws in the paltry charges and in the documents presented in their support, that Cauchon was compelled to change his intention, and substituted the charge of heresy. It was under this preposterous indictment that the pious Jeanne was brought face to face with her judges on February 21st. For months she had been kept in close

confinement, loaded with fetters, and kept under the guardianship of men. The sturdy girl had lost much of her vigor, as, indeed, had been the intention of her captors. But though the body was weakened, the spirit was yet unbroken; and Jeanne met the accusing judges, whom she knew to be already resolved upon her destruction, with the same firmness and untutored practical sagacity that had marked her bearing in the first encounter with those who sought to entangle her in the subtleties of metaphysics and theology. Of metaphysics and theology she knew not so much as the names, but she had a clear head and a thorough understanding of the fundamental principles of justice and of faith. So long as her physical strength lasted, the most adroit and insinuating queries of the prosecution could not trap her into compromising answers. Counsel for the defendant there was none; her own wit must defend her in the contest with judges who were at the same time prosecutors.

Being admonished by the insidious Cauchon to answer truly and without evasion or subterfuge whatever should be asked, she checkmated this move at once: "I do not know what you mean to question me about; you might ask me things which I would not tell you." She would speak the truth on all things, she said, and the whole truth, except on those things concerning her king or concerning her visions. Not till she had been brought before them for the third time, worn out by their persistence and by the increasing horrors of imprisonment, did she modify this so far as to consent to tell what she knew, but not all that she knew, and to answer unreservedly on points of faith. Never would she consent to testify against herself on the points which she saw that they wished to establish: "It is a common saying, even in the mouths of children, that people are often hanged for telling the truth." Complaining

of the hardship of being kept in irons, she was told it was because she had attempted to escape. "It is true, and it is allowable for any prisoner." Asked to repeat those divinely sincere and simple prayers which constituted the main part of the faith she had learned as a little child, she pronounced herself quite willing to repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary, if Bishop Cauchon would first hear her in confession, an office which he declined.

Throughout the tedious, soul-racking trial, lasting, in various forms,—now before the whole court, now in her prison, now in private inquests,—from the end of February till the end of May, the same steadfastness and caution prevailed in her answers. She told them freely of her visions, for now her saints had come back to her and inspired her, as she said, to answer boldly. If she came from God, they asked, did she think herself in a state of grace, incapable of committing a mortal sin? "If I am not in a state of grace," she replied, "may God be pleased to receive me into it; if I am, may God be pleased to keep me in it." Not one of the theologians present could have devised an answer more truly orthodox, more truly Christian in spirit, or more discomfiting to the casuists. On this occasion the judges were struck dumb, and very prudently adjourned the court for that day. Not hesitating at any meanness, one of her persecutors asked whether Saint Michael appeared to her naked? She answered him in the very spirit and almost in the very words of the Scriptures, as we learn from the record: "Not comprehending the vile insinuation, Joanna, whose poverty suggested to her simplicity that it might be the *costliness* of suitable robes which caused the demur, asked them if they fancied God, who clothed the flowers of the valleys, unable to find raiment for his servants." Again and again, questions were put to her, in answering which, if

she had been tainted with the least suspicion of imposture, she would have been tempted to pretend to powers greater than she had: "Do Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret hate the English?" "They love what our Lord loves, and hate what He hates."

Proof of her guilt, in the legal sense, there was none, and so much even the lawyers of Rouen recognized; but out of her own answers the ministers of the God of Justice were enabled, after months of juggling, to torture proof sufficient to convict her in their own eyes. When the wolf in Æsop's fable, seeks a pretext for devouring the lamb, we know from the beginning that that pretext will be found: "You have muddied the stream," cries the wolf, as he raises his head from drinking. "Nay, good sir, I am lower down the stream than you are." "If it was not you, it was one of your family." There was no hope for this lamb of France. "Never from the foundations of the earth," says De Quincey, "was there such a trial as this, if it were laid open in all its beauty of defence and all its hellishness of attack. Oh, child of France! shepherdess, peasant girl! trodden under foot by all around thee, how I honor thy flashing intellect, quick as God's lightning, and true as God's lightning to its mark, . . . confounding the malice of the ensnarer, and making dumb the oracles of falsehood! . . . 'Would you examine me as a witness against myself?' was the question by which many times she defied their arts. Continually she showed that their interrogations were irrelevant to any business before the court, or that entered into the ridiculous charges against her."

In the midst of the proceedings, about Palm Sunday, the poor girl fell ill, and there was some fear that through death she might escape the exemplary punishment they were preparing for her against the anticipated conviction. Her illness may have been chiefly mental and nervous

exhaustion, helped on by what would have been to her one of the most severe trials, homesickness. This is the impression left upon our minds by Lamartine and by Michelet as well as by De Quincey: "A country girl, born on the skirts of a forest, and having ever lived in the open air of heaven, she was compelled to pass this fine Palm Sunday in the depths of a dungeon." In the general rejoicing of Easter, while the bells of Rouen steeples rang forth the glad tidings of salvation for all, of relief from pain and sorrow, there lay in the castle dungeon a peasant girl, sick in body, sick in mind, dreaming of the fresh green fields, and the forests just now beginning to put forth their tender leaves, hearing the bells of her own far-away church in Domrémy, and the homely talk of old friends as they plodded by on their way to that church. She woke in the morning with the sound of the bells in her ears, and on that holy morning, as on many another for many weary weeks, there were the double chains upon her limbs padlocked to a transverse beam at the foot of her rough bed. And in the room, watching every move and torturing her with coarse jests or terrifying her with yet more cruel threats, were four or five soldiers, no woman near to minister to her wants or to shield her modesty. With such torture, with the added mental torture of almost daily cross-questioning whose object was to force her into the jaws of death, is it any wonder that Jeanne was ill, well-nigh reduced to the frenzy of despair?

Yet this forlorn creature, even when confronted with the threat of actual torture, never made an admission that would seriously conflict with the simple statement of her faith and of her mission which she had volunteered at the very beginning. Refusing to retract anything, she yet signified her willingness to submit to the authority of the Church. This was all that Cauchon had been able to

accomplish after more than two months' labor. A highly theatrical ceremony was arranged to dignify what they called her formal abjuration. Two scaffolds were erected in the cemetery of Saint-Ouen. On one sat Cardinal Winchester, Cauchon, and the other dignitaries. On the other, chained hand and foot and fastened at the waist to a post, surrounded by clerks who might take down any chance words and by the ministers of torture with their dread instruments, stood the poor child whom they had dragged from the prison. After a tedious and impious harangue by a famous preacher, whose false statements she would not listen to in silence, Jeanne consented to sign an abjuration which did not affect the validity of her claim. When the notary presented the pen to her unpractised fingers she smiled and blushed a little at her ignorance and awkwardness. She drew a circle upon the parchment at the place indicated, and then, the notary guiding her hand, made a cross within the circle. Then the Church admitted her to its *grace,* and the sentence was read to her: imprisonment for the rest of her life, "on the bread of grief and the water of anguish."

And so, being now received into the mercy of the Church, she was conducted back to her prison. It is a relief, in the midst of this cruel scene, to hear some expressing compassion and imploring her to sign the abjuration to save herself, though some there are who clamor loudly: "Let her be burnt!" The test of her sincerity in the new penitence was to be her willingness to wear garments befitting her sex. She had clung to her man's attire as the best, and indeed the only, safeguard to her honor, constantly threatened by her keepers and even attempted, we are told, by one brutal knight. Relying upon the good faith of her ecclesiastical custodians, now that she had done what they asked, Jeanne consented to put on the

women's clothes they gave her. But Cauchon had no intention of allowing her to escape the last punishment. His judges had assured the English, who complained that Jeanne would not be burned after all: "Do not fear, we shall soon have her again."

On May 24th she had signed her act of submission and had put aside the costume forbidden by the Church. On the morning of the 27th, when she wished to rise and dress herself, the guard had taken away her robes and left but the old forbidden garments. She expostulated, and at first refused to get up; but being at length constrained to do so, she put on the man's apparel. The wolf had made good and sufficient pretext for devouring the lamb; technically, Jeanne might be considered to have relapsed, and with the old dress to have resumed the old faults reprobated by Holy Church.

The judges were at once notified of Jeanne's disobedience, and Cauchon rejoiced that "she was caught." The next day, being Monday after Trinity, he returned to interrogate the prisoner upon the matter of the change of dress. Her courage had returned with the realization that they had not dealt fairly with her and meant to find pretexts for her destruction. She would neither excuse herself for again assuming her warrior garments nor consent to return to those prescribed by custom for her sex. As long as she was guarded by men, she said, it was more seemly and more safe that she should be dressed as a man; if they would put her in a safe and proper prison, she would submit to whatever the Church decreed. But Cauchon knew that her death was deemed requisite by his English friends, and he was determined to give her no such fair opportunity. On Tuesday a fresh tribunal was hastily constituted to pass upon the deplorable relapse into error of one for whom, to shield her from death, the Church

had done all that in it lay. Needless to say, this tribunal, a mere mockery of a court, decided on the evidence submitted that Jeanne was guilty of fatal disobedience to the Church and that she must suffer death as a heretic. It was to be but a step from passing sentence to the execution of that sentence, for Cauchon's masters were already impatient at the long delay.

The next morning a priest was sent to Jeanne to notify her of the sentence. One sudden burst of feeling, half fear, half indignation, for a moment overwhelmed the courage of the girl. She wept bitterly when told that she must prepare herself to die by fire that very day: "Alas! will they treat me so cruelly and horribly! Must my body, pure as from birth, never corrupted or soiled in sin, be this day consumed and reduced to ashes! Oh, oh! I had rather be beheaded seven times over than burnt on this wise. . . . Oh! I appeal to God, the great Judge of all, for the wrongs and injuries done me!" And then this heretic, this sorceress, asked that she be allowed to confess and to receive the Communion, that holy symbol of the universal brotherhood of the followers of Christ. Cauchon did not, perhaps dared not, deny her this; but he wished to divest the ceremony of part of its pomp. When the Eucharist was brought to him without stole and without lights, the courageous monk Martin l'Advenu refused to administer it thus, and sent a complaint to the cathedral; whereupon the chapter, always ready to spite Cauchon, sent an escort of priests and acolytes, who chanted litanies as they passed through the streets and conjured the kneeling people to pray for Jeanne.

By nine o'clock the victim had received the Communion, and was dressed in female attire and placed on a cart, ready to start for the place of execution. Brother Martin and the merciful Austin friar Isambart accompanied her

on that dreadful journey of the cart through the streets of Rouen to the old fish market. If there had been any tendency to sympathetic manifestations on the part of the crowd, the guard of eight hundred English soldiers would have sufficed to suppress them; and Jeanne, who had now given up hope of deliverance, of succor from her king, from her divine guardians, was heard only to ejaculate: "Rouen, Rouen! must I then die here?" In the market place had been erected two platforms, one for the cardinal and dignitaries, the other for the prisoner, the bailli, the judges, and the preacher who was to enhance the bitterness of death by rehearsing the particulars of her guilt. But what is that lofty scaffolding of wood and plaster standing apart? It is the altar upon which the sacrifice is to be offered, built high that all may see the tortures of an innocent maid as the flames mount rapidly up its flimsy mass.

A sermon began the proceedings, the eloquent Master Nicholas Mildy outdoing himself upon the text: "When one limb of the Church is sick, the whole Church is sick." After him came that pitiful tool, the Bishop of Beauvais, who exhorted Jeanne to repentance and to forgiveness of her enemies. There was small need of this, for Jeanne knelt and prayed so humbly, so earnestly, so pitifully, that all were moved to tears, while she asked the priests to pray for her soul and to say a Mass for her. Then Cauchon, in spite of his tears, read to her the act of condemnation, concluding: "Therefore, we pronounce you to be a rotten limb, and as such to be lopped off from the Church. We deliver you over to the secular power, *praying it at the same time to mitigate its sentence, and to spare you death,* and the mutilation of your members." The unblushing hypocrisy of this recommendation to mercy, with the pyre already reared in full sight of all, could only be surpassed by that of the diabolical fiction of

ecclesiastical law as administered by the Inquisition; viz., that Holy Church executed no capital sentence, merely handed its victim over to the "secular arm."

So now Jeanne, no longer under the merciful protection of the Church, was delivered over to the civil authorities and conducted to the top of the pyre. She asked for a cross; a tender-hearted Englishman handed her two sticks which he had hastily fashioned into a rude cross, and Jeanne kissed the simple emblem and put it in her bosom. But Isambart fetched a crucifix for her from the very altar of the neighboring church of Saint-Sauveur, and this she kissed passionately, desiring him to hold it aloft where she might see it to the last as the smoke and flame mounted. Isambart ascended the pile with her, and the executioner fastened her body to the post in the centre. With her eyes fixed upon the image of Him who died for the world, mayhap she did not note the lying placard above her head: "Heretic, relapser, apostate, idolater." In this hour of supreme trial no moment of fatal weakness came to deprive her of our absolute admiration. She spoke no word of deserved reproach against her rude executioners, against the soldiers who had hustled her across the market place, against the miserable Charles for whom she suffered all these tortures and who had abandoned her. "Whether I have done well, or whether I have done ill, my King is not to blame; it was not he who counselled me." Even the miserable Cauchon was greeted, as he hovered about the foot of the pile to catch her last words, with nothing more bitter than: "Bishop! Bishop! I die through you! . . . Had you confined me in the prisons of the Church, this would not have happened."

While the good monk lingers by her side, pouring into that saintly ear such words of comfort and hope as faith may suggest, the executioner applies his torch and Jeanne

sees the flames rush upward. "Jesus!" she cries, then exhorts the monk, "Fly, father! and when the flame shall cover me hold aloft the crucifix, that I may see it as I die, and repeat for me your holy words until the end." She thought of others, not of herself, even in this hour: who shall impugn her courage, or say she knew not how to die as nobly as she had lived? In the first spasm of pain, as the flames touched her body, she shrieked. After this but a few broken sentences came to the ears of those at the foot of the pile, sometimes appeals to the saints who had guided her, sometimes a despairing cry of anguish not to be suppressed. And then in the midst of the gathering flames they saw her head fall forward on her breast as she moaned, "Jesus!"

The voice that had aroused France from her lethargy was hushed forever; the great spirit of Jeanne d'Arc had gone to God, whence it came. Shall we stand by the smoking pyre till the last embers turn gray and cold, till Winchester orders the handful of ashes that remained to be swept into the Seine? Or shall we turn away, sick with horror, filled already with vain regret of the deed done, as did many in that dense crowd of her enemies? "We have burnt a saint!" cries one. "I saw a dove fly from her mouth and wing its way to heaven!" avers another.

Those who are actors in what the world learns to designate as great historical crises seldom realize the magnitude of the events of which they are immediate witnesses. In spite of the superstitious terror of a few and the pity of many, it is probable that not one in the great crowd hurrying away from the scene of Jeanne d'Arc's martyrdom realized that she was a martyr or that the cause for which she had died was near its hour of triumph. Their fear was but of one whom they deemed a favored ally of the powers of evil; their pity was but

for one whom they deemed a simple girl, and for whose anguish they grieved as they would have grieved for that of their own daughters or sisters. The pity of it, that one so young, so gentle, so innocent of worldly taint should suffer this cruel death! After all, this is the truest compassion, dispensed with even justice, without regard to person or rank, without thought as to whether the sufferer be the repentant thief or the Divine Master upon the Cross, the nameless woman taken in adultery or this girl of Lorraine who was to be acknowledged as the greatest woman in French history. Yet for us the knowledge that heartless political schemers had tortured to the death a woman becomes knowledge of far more moment when we know that Jeanne d'Arc was the woman, and our indignation against her persecutors is enhanced in proportion to our estimate of the greatness and the goodness of the heroine.

In the course of our narrative we have taken occasion, from time to time, to present estimates of the character of Jeanne d'Arc; perhaps it may be well, now that her meteoric career has ended in the flames of the market place of Rouen, to consider once more the character of this heroine in its main features. The results of her activity in French history, though not in all cases immediately apparent, were so marvellous that our judgment may well be unduly influenced. On the one hand, in our desire to emphasize the extraordinary nature of her deeds, we may tend to depreciate the actual abilities of Jeanne; on the other, the glory of the deeds may blind us to the shortcomings of the woman.

In her own day, and especially after her death, her contemporaries in France had begun to regard her as a saint, and a veritable cult of Jeanne d'Arc soon grew up, encrusting the simple facts of her story with endless and fantastic arabesques of legend. Charles VII., who had

abandoned the woman in her hour of need, who had made no earnest effort to succor the leader to whom he owed his crown, entered with considerable energy and enthusiasm into the cult of the saint. It was due to his initiative that, in 1455, Pope Calixtus III. gave order that Jeanne's trial be revised. It was at best but cold and tardy gratitude on Charles's part, this rehabilitation of the memory of the girl whom he had used and then dropped when she was no longer serviceable; but we must in justice say that he in every way furthered the investigation into the facts of an episode in his life which he must have now regarded with poignant regret and shame, more poignant as the glory of the lost heroine was brought into full light. In this exhaustive inquiry into the career of Jeanne d'Arc witnesses from far and near were examined and documents rescued from oblivion, and at the end of the eight months' proceedings the new court, with a mass of testimony before it which fills volumes, reversed the partisan decision of the court of Rouen, acquitted the heroine of the false charges brought against her, and not only vindicated her honor, but pronounced favorably upon her claims to sanctity. Jeanne was already canonized in popular imagination, and though the official sanction of Rome was long in the granting, in the hearts of all France she had a veneration far more precious than any ever vouchsafed to a saint.

Jeanne d'Arc did not regard herself as a saint, nor was she free from human faults of temper and of conduct that accord but ill with sanctity. Her outbursts of wholesome wrath, some one or two of which we have noted, mark her as that which she was, no patient martyr, but a strong, healthy woman, normal in many things, and blessed with much practical sense, in spite of her visions. It was this very fact in Jeanne's life that enabled her enemies to

seize upon the manifestations of her likeness to other women of her class and time and to draw Jeanne as but a common, coarse, immodest woman. In the disgusting Joan of Shakespeare's *Henry VI.* (if it be his), and in the shameless wanton of Voltaire's *Pucelle d'Orléans* there is just this much of truth to life, that the true Jeanne was a peasant lass and, in all things not directly connected with her great deeds, spoke and acted as one of her class would have acted and spoken,—with far greater freedom than would be consistent with modesty in a more cultured society. We do not mean to say that there is the least justification or excuse for these attempts to defame Jeanne d'Arc; to condemn her as a common virago because she sometimes uttered her commands with too little regard for propriety in speech would be like condemning Washington because he could and did, on occasion, swear a good round oath. But the proper defence of Jeanne d'Arc against Shakespeare and Voltaire is neither to vilify them nor to obscure the human side of her character and exalt her to something altogether faultless and divine, something altogether "too bright and good for human nature's daily food."

With or without the poetic praises of biographers, Jeanne d'Arc deserves her place as, all things considered, one of the most remarkable figures in the world's history. In spite of human defects, she is "the one pure figure which rises out of the greed, the lust, the selfishness and unbelief of the time." How can we draw our sketch to a conclusion better than in the words of a great Englishman, himself in some things the arch-prophet of divine enthusiasm? In his comment upon Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orléans*, Carlyle says: "Feelings so deep and earnest as hers can never be an object of ridicule: whoever pursues a purpose of any sort with such fervid devotedness is entitled to awaken emotions, at least of a serious kind, in the hearts

of others. Enthusiasm puts on a different shape in every different age: always in some degree sublime, often it is dangerous; its very essence is a tendency to error and exaggeration; yet it is the fundamental quality of strong souls; the true nobility of blood, in which all greatness of thought or action has its rise. *Quicquid vult valdè vult* is ever the first and surest test of mental capability. This peasant girl, who felt within her such fiery vehemence of resolution that she could subdue the minds of kings and captains to her will and lead armies on to battle, conquering, till her country was cleared of its invaders, must evidently have possessed the elements of a majestic character. . . . Jeanne d'Arc must have been a creature of shadowy yet far-glancing dreams, of unutterable feelings, of 'thoughts that wandered through eternity.' Who can tell the trials and the triumphs, the splendors and the terrors, of which her simple spirit was the scene! . . . Hers were errors, but errors which a generous soul alone could have committed, and which generous souls would have done more than pardon. Her darkness and delusions were of the understanding only; but they make the radiance of her heart more touching and apparent; as clouds are gilded by the orient light into something more beautiful than azure itself."

Great and pure and noble was thy faith, Maid of Orléans! And of a truth it wrought miracles, for thy brave and steadfast heart divined what was to be done and faltered not by the wayside. And yet, adoring thee as a saint, let us love thee as a simple girl, "Jehanne la bonne Lorraine"!

"Berthe au grand pied, Bietris, Allys
Harembourges, qui tint le Mayne,
Et Jehanne la bonne Lorraine
Qu'Anglois bruslèrent à Rouen:
Où sont-ilz, Vierge Souveraine?
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?"

Chapter XLV

The Rise of the Monarchy

XIV

THE RISE OF THE MONARCHY

HISTORIANS, having a predilection for exactness, are concerned to find dates not only for kings and queens and battles and treaties, but for those great changes in the manners and morals of mankind which begin unconsciously, are wrought out in silence, and present themselves to the historian as accomplished revolutions before he is at all aware that anything of moment is going on. A revolution of this kind was in progress throughout Christendom in the fifteenth century; and its results are so astonishing, so bewildering in their magnitude and in their infinite ramifications that we resort to figurative language and call the movement the Renaissance, the Revival of Learning. It is, indeed, a new birth, a new life, rather newer and altogether more astonishing than any mere return of the learning of the ancients could have been; but the leaven in the decaying mass of feudalism operated slowly, and did not come to full power until long after the period which must be a limit for this book; therefore, we can but note certain significant facts in the mighty process which was to transform the feudal lady of the château into the lady of the court and of the brilliant literary salon, to substitute a Catherine de Médicis, or a Marguerite de Navarre, or a Madame de La Fayette, for an Eleanor of Guienne, a Mahaut d'Artois, or a Christine de Pisan. As

nearly as can be determined, the age of feudalism ends in the fifteenth century; but the soul of the old civilization leaves its body imperceptibly and enters into that of the new: it "melts, and makes no noise,"

> "As virtuous men pass mildly away,
> And whisper to their souls to go,
> Whilst some of their sad friends do say
> Now his breath goes, and some say no."

Jeanne d'Arc herself, we have said in the preceding chapter, was no product of chivalry, found no chivalry to shield her. The old was already in her time yielding place to the new; for during the fifteenth century feudalism as well as chivalry was going to its death in France and in nearly all Europe. In France the civil wars had not only demoralized chivalry, they had also served to sever the intimate ties that bound the feudal lord and his family to the soil of their fief almost as rigidly as the villain was bound. Some families were utterly destroyed, some sought new lands, and found them in parts of the country far distant from their ancient holdings. With all his theoretically arbitrary power, the old baron, reared amid the peasants he was to govern, felt a certain kinship with them, and was often regardful of their time-honored customs and privileges, forgoing in their favor what arbitrary despotism or caprice suggested. No such ties bound the new nobles to their new vassals; the hold of the feudal lord upon his vassals was weakened, as was their influence upon him. Many new families had risen into prominence, and kings no longer hesitated to ennoble parvenus, a sure sign that the solidarity of the ancient nobility of the soil was broken. This had come to pass in France by the time the great Louis XI. ascended the throne, not a generation after Jeanne d'Arc, and the same process was going on in

England through the Wars of the Roses. Louis was the determined enemy of feudalism, which he would have uprooted utterly. Much he did uproot; more he would have done, had he lived.

In the midst of this generation of struggles between the king and the faltering remnants of feudalism there are two or three instances in which the women as well as the men of the middle class deserve mention. Before we deal with the short and sad career of the last of the great house of Bourgogne, Marie, daughter of Charles le Téméraire, we may glance at the simple story of a woman who defended Beauvais from this same Charles.

The danger from England had passed; there was no longer need of a Jeanne d'Arc to drive out the insolent *Goddems;* but a new enemy was found for France in the person of that great Duke of Burgundy whom modern history has named Charles the Bold, more properly Charles the Rash, or, as his contemporaries first called him, the Terrible, "that wild bull wearing a crown, that wild boar who rushed straight ahead, his eyes shut." In the spring of 1472, while Louis XI. was intent upon reducing to submission the rebellious Duke of Brittany, Charles le Téméraire, impatient at the tricky diplomacy which baffled him, declared war upon France and marched at once into Picardy with a great army, ravaging and burning as he went. Louis, unwilling to be diverted from his attempt upon the Duke of Brittany, whom he was holding fast in his grip, could spare few troops, and gave orders that the small towns be abandoned and resistance be concentrated in the larger cities. The brave little town of Nesle was the first to offer a determined but hopeless resistance to the enraged Burgundian: Nesle was carried by assault, its defenders put to the sword or mutilated by the lopping off of their right hands. The very church ran with blood as

Charles rode into it, commending the savage butchery of the inhabitants by his soldiers.

Beauvais was the next place of importance in his path, and the terrible news of the slaughter and the burning at Nesle was enough to inspire terror among its citizens. Yet these honest citizens, who had enjoyed liberal charters from France, were moved by a spirit of patriotism that is the best testimony to the fair treatment they had received from the subtle Louis. The fortifications of the town were antiquated, in no wise adapted to resist the powerful artillery that Charles was bringing with him, even had they been in good repair; as it was, they were going to ruin. And even had their walls been good and strong, the citizens had no garrison to help them to defend the town, and no munitions of war. A general meeting of the citizens debated the question of absolute submission, or of a resistance which, after the fate of Nesle, they felt must be to the bitter end. The vote was unanimous for resistance; they would do their duty and hold out for the king, though the last man should perish beneath the ruins. At once they began repairing the walls, closing up gates and posterns, and barricading the streets.

On the 27th of June, the bell of the great cathedral sounded the tocsin: the Burgundian army was in sight. And against this great army of disciplined soldiers must stand the volunteer defenders of the city. The assault began at once, after the Burgundian herald had summoned the town: "In the name of the Duke, I summon the captain and the inhabitants of the city to submit humbly to his pleasure."

Upon the walls the citizens had piled stones to hurl upon the assailants, and pots of hot oil and hot water were at hand to be emptied on their heads. Foremost in this work were the women of the town, while the men were left free

to use their crossbows, arquebuses, axes. One figure stands out prominently in this band of heroic women; it is that of a young girl of eighteen, who constitutes herself leader, marshals her companions, and drives from their homes timid maids and matrons, urging them on to bear stones to the ramparts, if they will do no more.

Like the great savior of France, this girl is named Jeanne; like her, too, she is of lowly birth, a good, honest girl of the people. Jeanne Laisné, daughter of a simple artisan, Mathieu Laisné, was born about 1454, in Beauvais. She was a wool-carder, one used to earning her own bread, and hence full of the energy and courage born of independence, not yet broken by years of severe toil. She was comely, too; perhaps an indispensable requirement in one who would win the unrestricted praise of the historians of a gallant race. Whether beautiful or not, Jeanne was a very Deborah of her class, inspired with that fervent love of home, of *patrie,* which is innate in every good woman, and which is sometimes strongest in those who have to thank the *patrie* for no favors of fortune. No heavenly spirits guided her, no prophecies proceed from her; her sole inspiration was courage and the determination to help in the defence of Beauvais. It would have been so easy for her to assume the rôle of a Jeanne d'Arc; she might even have pretended to be La Pucelle come to life again, as did several impostors who had recently won temporary credit, notably one who was brought to Charles VII., pretended to recognize him by divine inspiration, and confessed her imposture only when the king received her in good faith and referred to "the secret between me and thee." It is to the credit of this new Jeanne that she made no false pretensions, but simply served her native city and lived her life as merely the Jeanne whom all had known, and whom all respected.

Of her deeds during the siege there is not much to tell in detail, though it was her spirit and energy that insured the coöperation of other women. At first she and her band of amazons aided the men so effectually that the Burgundians were repulsed with heavy loss. But Charles was bent upon carrying the town by assault. His soldiers were urged on to the attack day after day, and still they saw the women of the town battling against them and were driven back from the walls, which the artillery, short of ammunition, could not breach. They carried one of the gates; Jeanne and her fellow townsmen fired it, and the fire burned so fiercely that for a week approach on that side was cut off.

On the 9th of July, says the Canon of Beauvais, Jean de Bonneuil, "the Burgundians began the assault upon the gates of the Hôtel-Dieu and of Bresle, in which assault the women bore (around the walls) the body of Saint Agadresme, patron saint of Beauvais." But the repulse of this assault was not to be due to the miraculous intervention of Saint Agadresme; it was again Jeanne Laisné, now surnamed Hachette, from the ax she wielded, who saved the city. "It is not to be forgotten," continues the chronicler, "that in the said assault, while the Burgundians were setting up their ladders and mounting upon the walls, one of the said women of Beauvais, called Jeanne Laisné, did, without other aid or arm, seize and snatch away from one of the said Burgundians the standard which he bore and carry it to the church of the Jacobins, where was the shrine of Saint Agadresme." Jeanne had remained on the ramparts while the enemy came on to the assault; and as the standard bearer planted the Burgundian flag in a breach, she smote him with her ax, so that he fell back into the fosse. Others hurried to her aid, and repelled once more the disheartened assailants.

Meanwhile, succor had come for Beauvais; at first only a handful of men-at-arms from Noyon, then at last a large body of troops under the best leaders in France effected an entrance into the town, and enabled it to withstand an assault lasting from dawn until noon, in which the duke sacrificed scores of his men to no purpose. Not till he found his army too much depleted and discouraged for further offensive operations, however, did Charles retire from before Beauvais, burning and pillaging as he marched toward Normandy. On July 22d the besiegers were gone.

The heroism of Jeanne Hachette, as everyone now called her, had proved contagious: "All the women of the town, high and low, showed themselves to be so valiant during this siege that they surpassed in boldness the men of other towns." It was to the women, so all were willing to admit, that the preservation of Beauvais had been due; and now it was for Louis, as well as for the citizens, to make some visible and worthy acknowledgment of the debt. Louis, who, says Michelet, "in his devout speculations . . . often took the saints and Our Lady for partners, keeping an open account with them, and trading for profit or loss, (thinking) by charities . . . by petty sums in advance, to secure their interest for some capital stroke,"—Louis had vowed a whole "town of silver" for the safety of Beauvais, and abstention from all flesh until the vow should be fulfilled. With all his superstition, and all his meanness and harshness to the nobles, he would do unexpectedly generous things to reward and to encourage the commons, whom he loved and on whom he relied when noble lords might play him false. In the present instance he granted special privileges to the women of Beauvais; and his ordinances to that effect are curious in that they attempt to propitiate Saint Agadresme—who might be useful in connection with the "open account" mentioned

above—and at the same time to offer more substantial rewards to the wives of Beauvais.

The first of these ordinances, dated 1473, establishes an annual procession in honor of Saint Agadresme and of the deliverance of the city, and specially exempts the women of Beauvais from the operation of the sumptuary laws. After rehearsing the most dramatic incident of the siege, and praising the *très grande audace, constance et vertu, . . . oultre existimation du sexe féminin,* the text of the edict continues: "(The King) decrees that every year a procession be held, at the cost of our receipt and domains in the said city; and we order that henceforth forever the women in this procession shall precede the men and march immediately after the priests upon that day; and furthermore, they (the women) may, upon the day of their weddings or at any other times that it may please them, wear and adorn themselves with any raiment, ornaments, or jewels (that they may desire), without being subject to question, reproof, or prosecution, no matter of what rank of life they may be."

More interesting to us, because more directly concerning the heroine herself, is the edict from which we learn of the special favors granted her. Beginning with a recital of the brave deeds done at Beauvais, and especially of the *bonne et vertueuse résistance* of *notre chière et amée Jeanne Laisné, fille de Mathieu Laisné,* the king's edict proceeds: "For these reasons, and also because of and in favor of the marriage of Colin Pilon and (Jeanne), which marriage was, by our help, arranged for, agreed upon, and celebrated, and also for divers other reasons and considerations, we have granted and now do grant, by special grace, in these present letters, that the said Colin Pilon, and Jeanne, his wife, each one of them, shall be and remain for life exempt and free from all taxes that are

and that may be in the future imposed and exacted in our name throughout our kingdom, whether for the maintenance or keep of our armies and soldiers or for any other cause whatsoever, and (they shall also be exempt) from the duties of watch and ward, wheresoever in our kingdom they may take up their abode. Given at Senlis, this 22nd day of February, in the year of grace one thousand four hundred and seventy-four."

It will be seen from this that Jeanne was already married, and that the king himself had taken some sort of personal interest in her case, supplying the very necessary *dot* for the bride. She had not sought an alliance out of her own class, for Colin Pilon was a simple man-at-arms, who did not live long to enjoy either the love of his wife or the favor of the king, for he fell at the siege of Nancy, in 1477. A few years later, Jeanne married a cousin, one Fourquet, a soldier of fortune, at one time in the personal guard of the king. Henceforth nothing more is known of her, not even the date of her death. But popular fancy associated her so intimately with the siege of Beauvais that, be her real surname what it might, she was always Jeanne Hachette; and even in the nineteenth century a certain Pierre Fourquet d'Hachette, claiming descent from the humble heroine, received a pension from Charles X. In Beauvais, too, her name and the memory of her good service were kept alive not only by the annual parade on the festival of Saint Agadresme, but also by a faded, ancient standard, borne by the young girls in the procession, at other times carefully guarded among the treasures of the city. It was a standard of white damasked cloth, bearing figures and mottoes in gilt and colored paints. Even now one can decipher the haughty device of Charles le Téméraire: *Je l'ay emprins* (I have undertaken it), and beside it the emblems of the great order of the Golden

Fleece. It is the very standard that the girl snatched from the Burgundian soldier more than four centuries ago.

The story of Jeanne Hachette is but an episode, of course; but in reading it we should remember that, however small the part she played in the great history of the world, she had one rare trait, a trait often distinctive of the best figures in history, though not always of the most notable—modesty. Like Jeanne d'Arc, her task once accomplished she was content to be what she had been before; more fortunate than that other Jeanne, she lived to see herself honored, and was not spoiled thereby any more than Jeanne d'Arc was spoiled by her far greater triumphs.

If Jeanne Hachette was a representative of that class now about to assume greater importance in the life of France, namely the artisans, the unfortunate daughter of Charles le Téméraire was, in her character as well as in the events of her life, as surely representative of disappearing feudalism and chivalry. Marie de Bourgogne was all her life but the plaything of a court that would use her in its pageants and in its schemes of aggrandizement with utter disregard of what might be her personal preferences. Reared amidst surroundings that suggested the pomp and glory of chivalry and were eloquent of feminine dependence if not of feminine inferiority, she was suddenly left to cope with one of the ablest and one of the most unscrupulous politicians in history.

Marie de Bourgogne was born at Brussels in 1457, being the first child born of the union of Isabelle de Bourbon and the haughty young Count de Charolais, who had been most unwilling to espouse this bride of his father's choice and who yet made a devoted and faithful husband. When Marie was born she was still but the daughter of the Count de Charolais, for ten years more of life remained

for the worn out old Philippe le Bon. Still, she was prospective heiress of the great duchy of Burgundy, though none could yet foresee that she was the only hope of the great family that had made itself, in the hundred years of its existence, the most dangerous enemy, the most indispensable ally of France, nay, even the rival of France among the great powers of Europe.

The little countess was but eight years of age when her mother died, scarcely old enough to appreciate the loss, except perhaps to grieve that she must be reared by a great lady of her grandfather's court, the Countess of Crèvecœur. Three years more, and she had to take part in the greeting given to her father's second wife, Margaret of York. Little could Marie have understood of the political significance of this union which united the fortunes of the house of Burgundy with those of a family whose brief ascendency was marked by almost continual war and by political crimes of the darkest hue: the brothers of her stepmother were the handsome voluptuary, Edward IV., "false, fleeting, perjured Clarence, that stabbed" young Edward of Lancaster "in the field by Tewkesbury," and the dark-minded Richard of Gloucester. It was a union of sinister omen for Charles, and one that had been opposed by his father: no good did or could come of it for Charles, and yet, to spite France, he persevered in his design, and brought Marie to take her small part in the brilliant reception accorded Margaret at Bruges. Marie must have witnessed and enjoyed the great show, and the famous tournament of the *perron d'or* (golden beam), in which her father condescended to break a lance or two in honor of his bride; but she is hardly mentioned in the glowing accounts of these festivities, in which the ancient glories of chivalry were revived and surpassed. She was but a daughter, and though her father loved her it was only

natural that he should yet hope for a son who might wear his ducal coronet.

But the years passed, and still there was no son: Mademoiselle de Bourgogne seemed fated to wear that ducal coronet. Charles grew in power, in arrogance, in ambition; it was to be no longer a mere coronet, but a crown; he would found a new dynasty that would eclipse that of the elder branch of the Valois; at one time the very crown was made ready and exposed to the admiring yet fearful eyes of his future subjects. Marie, who had grown into a handsome if not beautiful girl, carefully trained in all the accomplishments that befitted her rank, became a personage of great importance in the ambitious schemes of her father. According to the custom of princes, her name was used as a lure in securing desirable alliances; and her wishes were but little regarded in the selection of her future husband. She was merely a sort of asset to be reckoned among the other properties of which Charles might dispose to the highest bidder in furtherance of his projects. Her charms would naturally be set forth to the best advantage, therefore, in the pages of loyal Burgundian chroniclers, and in the midst of the diplomatic bargaining we forget not only that Marie was a girl, with at least some girlish fancies and preferences and romantic dreams, but we fail to distinguish the actual features of the girl. If one may judge from the portraits, Marie could not have been really a beauty; though there are upon the face the indefinable marks of high breeding, its lines are too heavy, moulded too obviously on the pattern of the features of her redoubtable father; above all, there is that heavy lip and protruding jaw, so very noticeable in her descendants as to become a distinguishing family mark, albeit they call it Austrian, not Burgundian. But she was a comely girl; besides, would suitors hang back because

the richest heiress in Europe was not at the same time a Venus?

Charles met with no difficulty in finding suitors for his daughter's hand; there was merely the embarrassment of choice among so many who might be considered or who considered themselves eligible. At length, in 1473, Marie was betrothed to Nicholas of Calabria. But Nicholas died, and Marie was again to be disposed of; the betrothal had been too absolutely a matter of politics to justify any delay in seeking a new husband now that death had removed Nicholas. It happened that just at this time Charles was very eager to propitiate the empire, in furtherance of those schemes of monarchy that now began to assume definite shape in his imagination. The Archduke Maximilian, though somewhat more than three years younger than Marie, and though poor, was nevertheless the son of the emperor, and might be considered useful to Burgundy. The negotiations were conducted quietly; Charles did not, it appears, wish to show himself too anxious; perhaps he was thinking that circumstances might change, and therefore did not wish to commit himself to this match beyond the power of recall.

For the present, however, the noble lovers, who had never met, were both rather young; there was no need to hurry matters, since Charles himself was still in the prime of life. The disastrous campaign of the great duke in Switzerland has been described many a time, by historians friendly and unfriendly, and by a great romancer who loved all chivalry and who yet could not withhold his admiration from the intrepid Swiss freemen who bore down the power of Burgundy at Granson, at Morat, and at Nancy. Yet, whether we consider Charles a great ruler and leader or a mere military ruffian, no one can look without pity upon that snow-covered battlefield of Nancy, where a

generous foe and the heartbroken servants of "the pride of chivalry" must look in vain for two days for the body of Charles; none could surely tell how he had fallen; and when they found his frozen body the dogs had eaten half of one cheek, and the wounds on the head rendered it almost unrecognizable.

Mademoiselle de Bourgogne, as she was now to be known in earnest, was far away in Ghent when the fatal news of her father's death was brought. Before it could reach her it had reached the crafty old king. For Louis it was the sweetest news he could have heard; his greatest foe was providentially removed, and as his adversary in Burgundy there was now but a girl scarcely grown, a girl whose selfish advisers he well knew how to bribe or to ruin, as suited his interest. Well may we believe that when the news of Charles's death reached that French court where so many of the nobles had felt him to be their only help against the anti-feudal policy of Louis, "not one ate half he could at dinner," as the shrewd Comines says; now that the pillar of independent baronage was gone, who could tell what the king might do?

Marie de Bourgogne was almost a prisoner among her too devoted subjects, the burghers of Ghent. She and her counsellors realized from the first that the real danger was to come from Louis XI., who would now seek to reannex to the crown those large portions of the Burgundian domain that had originally come from France. Perhaps the letter of the feudal law was on the side of the king, who claimed the right of wardship over his female vassal; but Marie knew full well that this claim was but the first of a long series that would culminate in the actual seizure of French Burgundy as soon as Louis should feel himself strong enough. But though Louis was the ultimate and the greater danger, he could be put off, it was thought, by

conciliatory messages; an immediate danger lay in turbulent Flanders, which even the strong duke could not master, and which now, in the midst of much exuberant devotion for mademoiselle, kept her in a state of constant uneasiness. Something must be done to quiet the Flemings.

Marie, in imitation of all new-made sovereigns whose crowns are none too secure, began by granting most liberal charters and privileges to her loyal subjects in Flanders. For the most part, the liberties thus granted had been ancient liberties, temporarily denied under the Burgundians, and now resumed by the people with or without the official consent of their duchess. The Ghenters at once exercised their right of being their own judges, and arrested the magistrates who had dared to surrender the city's liberties to Charles and had governed in his name. But neither the granting of privileges to Flanders nor the grateful affection of the Ghenters could defend from Louis Picardy and the coveted towns on the Somme; money must be had, and the generous commons of Flanders were appealed to. This congress of the estates of Flanders, Artois, Hainault, Brabant, and Namur met at Ghent on February 3, 1477, less than a month after the death of Charles. Marie repeated to the delegates her assurances, her oaths, her promises, and granted the "Great Privilege," a sort of Magna Charta and Bill of Rights in the history of Holland. The special privileges enumerated in this grant are not novel; the grant was intended merely as a formal restatement—to be formally ratified by the sovereign—of those inalienable and indefeasible rights of the subject which were not recognized in most countries for many a decade to come. "It was a recapitulation and recognition of ancient rights, not an acquisition of new privileges. It was a restoration, not a revolution." The nature of the rights asserted by the subject and admitted

by the sovereign may be easily gathered from a glance at one or two. "Offices shall be conferred by the duchess upon natives alone; and no man shall fill two offices. No office shall be farmed out. The great Council and Supreme Court of the provinces shall be re-established. . . . No new taxes may be imposed but by consent of the estates. No war, whether offensive or defensive, shall be begun by the duchess or any of her successors without the consent of the estates. . . . No money shall be coined, nor shall its value be raised or lowered, except by consent of the estates." If the principles here enunciated could have been made good in practice, the liberties of Marie's subjects would indeed have been secure; but much of this Great Privilege, as well as of the similar charters granted to other provinces, was pure theory, and Marie no more meant to abide by her oath of ratification than King John had meant to observe the provisions of Magna Charta. For the present, however, she must feign to be right well pleased, though her cautious and devoted subjects had not granted her the aid she wanted, to be used as she saw fit. All negotiations would be conducted in her name, of course, but in dealing with Louis she must be guided by the counsel of the estates; and the estates would levy an army of a hundred thousand men for her—when it suited them to do so. That was the sum and substance of all that Marie could cajole them into granting.

Meanwhile, Louis was making ready to seize Burgundy and Picardy, advancing now one pretext, now another, for his acts, seeking to give every seizure the appearance of legality, but bent on seizing, right or wrong. Marie despatched two of her father's oldest advisers, the chancellor Hugonet and the lord of Humbercourt, as ambassadors to Louis, to delay his proceedings. Though faithful to the interests of their duchess, Hugonet and Humbercourt were

no match for the crafty king. He had already tampered with other servants of Burgundy, and had found few who could not be made to see that French gold or French titles were better worth considering than any favors received from a master who could no longer reward. Of this class was the Lord of Crèvecœur, whose mother had been the guardian of the young duchess when she had no mother, and to whom one of the most important charges in Burgundy had been deputed,—the governorship of Picardy and of the towns on the Somme. Crèvecœur was a knight of the Toison d'Or, and had received countless other favors from Charles, whose daughter he was now willing to betray. What Louis most desired was Arras; this my Lord of Crèvecœur held for Burgundy; might there not be found some legal subterfuge or quibble authorizing him to hold it for the king? Louis cajoled, entreated, almost menaced, the Burgundian envoys, till they, thinking he would have Arras anyway, yielded so far as to issue an order to Crèvecœur, signed by the chancellor, Hugonet, authorizing him to open the gates of the town to the king. Louis entered Arras on March 4th, and Marie soon found that her troubles had but just begun.

When the news of the surrender of Arras reached Ghent the citizens were furious, and demanded satisfaction from those who had betrayed the public trust. A fresh embassy went, from the States this time, to meet Louis, who was advancing through Picardy. Marie had to consent to this embassy, and doubtless thought that little harm would come of it; but the unscrupulous Louis knew how to deal with the burghers, and no considerations of honor hindered him from using any means in his power to sow the seeds of suspicion between the burghers and their duchess. When the embassy remonstrated with him for the desire to despoil the young heiress and told him that "there was

no harm in her, that they could answer for her prudence and good faith, since she had publicly sworn to be guided by the Council of the States in all things," Louis assumed an injured air. "You are deceived," he said, "your mistress means to be guided by the advice of persons who do not desire peace." The envoys, thinking that Marie had been perfectly sincere and frank, refused to credit ill of her. Then Louis showed them a private note, in Marie's own hand, telling him that she would be guided solely by the advice of the court party and of Hugonet and Humbercourt in particular, and begging him to keep this secret from the envoys of the States.

Enraged and mortified by this scandalous duplicity the burgher envoys returned hastily to Ghent. The duchess received them in solemn audience, seated upon her throne and surrounded by her courtiers. With great show of indignation she denied the allegations of the king. "Here is your own letter," said the chief of the envoys, drawing it forth from his bosom. Marie was overwhelmed with confusion, and knew not what to say. She trembled even for her own safety, now that this royal personage, in defiance of the comity of princes, had betrayed her to her own subjects. The duplicity of which she had been guilty was not so reprehensible as it seems to us; the blame of it rests more upon her advisers than upon her, and she was but a weak girl, encompassed by selfish intriguers and plotters who sought to rob her of that which she had been taught to regard as her unquestioned right.

The most conspicuous of her counsellors, though not by any means the ones solely responsible for this unfortunate letter, were Hugonet and Humbercourt, who, feeling that the Ghenters would take vengeance upon them, threw themselves into a monastery immediately after the fatal audience, but were dragged out of the sanctuary that very

night. Marie, faithful to those who had been faithful to her, would gladly have saved them, but upon the mere rumor that the prisoners would be allowed to escape the Ghenters flew to arms, congregated in the Friday market place, and, asserting their ancient right of permanent assembly in time of danger, camped there day and night till the two envoys were tried and executed. Marie might have claimed that the unhappy victims, being ducal officers, should be delivered over to the Grand Council for trial; but in view of the excited state of popular feeling even that was not to be thought of. And when she nominated a commission in which thirty out of thirty-six were citizens of Ghent, that too was insufficient assurance that the accused would be convicted; the citizens would have the whole affair in their own hands; their privileges had been tampered with, and they alone should punish the offenders.

Marie did not even yet relax her efforts on behalf of Hugonet and Humbercourt; her determined fidelity to what she considered a sacred duty—the protection of those who had risked themselves in her service—is the best trait in her character. The gratitude of princes is not usually a burdensome obligation to them; but the best principles of chivalry had been instilled into Marie, and, like her rash but generous father, she would risk all on a point of honor. She sent representatives of the nobles to sit with the burgher's court, though they could take no part in the proceedings, and must be mere spectators of a judgment already resolved upon. When the supreme moment approached, Marie herself went to implore mercy for her servants. Dressed as a simple Flemish maiden, with the citizen's cap upon her head, she went on foot and unattended by guard or courtier or even so much as a lady of her suite, through the angry crowd in the market place to the Town Hall, where the court sat.

But the judges themselves were more overawed by the relentless crowd whose angry murmurs penetrated to them than by the presence of their lady. Pity her they did; but as one of them said, pointing to the crowd: "We must satisfy the people." Not daunted by this failure, Marie went among the people themselves, those loving yet terrible subjects who had gathered to see that their will was carried out. In Friday market place she went from one to another, weeping, with clasped hands imploring them not to punish servants who had merely obeyed her commands. The sight of this defenceless girl, braving dangers in such a cause and venturing among a people whom she had offended, moved many to hearken to her plea. The men began to separate into two parties, those who could hear and see their lady inclining to her side, those farther off, removed from the direct influence of her presence, clamoring for justice upon the accused. Pikes were ranged against pikes, and there was imminent danger of a conflict; but the partisans of the duchess were in the minority, and their enthusiasm in her cause waned when they realized the danger of a civil broil. Marie's courageous appeal served only to hurry on the trial, since the judges were determined not to risk another scene fraught with such dangers.

Hugonet and Humbercourt were put to the torture, and confessed what was enough to convict them, though it was what everyone already knew: that they had surrendered Arras. Humbercourt, a knight of the Toison d'Or, appealed to that body, which alone had jurisdiction over its members; but legal forms could not be respected in this crisis. When the court presented the confessions and the sentence to the young duchess,—a formality with which, in all their disregard of legal forms, they thought it necessary to comply,—she protested again, wept, entreated.

All was vain: "Madam," said they, "you have sworn to do justice not only upon the poor, but upon the rich."

The two nobles were placed in the condemned cart—where, on account of the injuries received in the torture, they could not stand—and led to execution. The people had succeeded in destroying those who had dared to disregard their wishes; the sovereign of Burgundy was completely in their power. They declared themselves her most fitting guardians and counsellors, deprived her of the comfort of having even members of her family about her, and proposed to find a husband for her more suitable than any suggested by the nobles.

To all of this Marie was forced to submit with what grace she could; but upon the matter of a husband she was resolved to have something to say for herself. No less than six suitors had some sort of claim to her, besides the one to whom her father had betrothed her in 1473. There was the dauphin, a mere boy of eight, for whom Louis was intriguing; there was, at the other extreme, the worthless and worn-out profligate, Clarence, whom Margaret of York hoped to establish in this new and rich nest; there was the fierce and cruel Adolphus of Guelders, who had ended a career of crime in prison, and whom the Ghenters meant to take out of prison that he might be their duke and leader: then there were the English Lord Rivers, brother of England's queen, and the son of the Lord of Ravenstein, and the son of the Duke of Cleves. In the whole list there was not one whom the poor girl could have considered with anything but aversion. The worst of all, both politically and personally, was the dauphin; the idea of contracting a marriage with a mere child, and that child the son of her most dangerous enemy, was revolting to Marie's feelings, so lately excited by the death of her two servants, betrayed by Louis. At her very

court she was surrounded by spies, who, pretending to sympathize with her and console her, reported to Louis or to the emperor all the intimate confidences of the poor girl.

The interest of Austria finally seemed to be in the ascendant, for now Margaret, despairing of making Clarence acceptable either to the young lady or to her subjects or even to Edward IV., had thrown her influence on the side of Maximilian, and the influence of France in the Burgundian councils had been ruined by the manifest determination of the king to absorb all French Burgundy, all Flanders, if he could get it. There had not been sufficient time for the growth of real national feeling in the ill-assorted and scattered provinces of the duchy; but the non-French parts of Burgundy, at least, by no means relished the idea of losing their identity and becoming parts of France.

Personal reasons also inclined Marie to favor the Austrian suitor. Maximilian had been in some sort the choice of her father, and this alone would have some weight with her. Besides, he was young; report said he was handsome: "The hairs of his august head are, after the German fashion, golden, lustrous, curiously adorned, and of becoming length. His port is lordly." And report spoke no ill of this fair young golden-haired Teuton; he might be some three years younger than Mademoiselle de Bourgogne, but he was already a man and a bold hunter, though as yet he had had no opportunity of showing whether he were capable of leading armies, a very necessary accomplishment in one who would undertake the care of Mademoiselle and her much coveted heritage. He was poor: but was not she rich enough to make up the deficiency? On the whole, Mademoiselle was so favorably impressed with what the Austrian advocates could tell her that she determined to receive the embassy then on the way to present the formal claim of Maximilian.

The Duke of Cleves, who had hopes for his own son, did his best to delay the ambassadors, and, failing that, to make Marie promise to give them an audience and then send them about their business. She had already had enough of diplomatic experience to make her cautious. The Duke of Cleves was not taken into her confidence, but was permitted to hope that Mademoiselle would not settle the matter with the Austrian envoys.

The envoys came, and were received in public audience, where their chief rehearsed the details of the negotiations between the late duke and emperor, and ended by presenting a letter written by Mademoiselle herself in acknowledgment of the betrothal, and a diamond sent by her as a token. Then Marie, to the utter dismay of the intriguers, quietly replied, of her own accord: "I wrote that letter by the wish and command of my lord and father, and sent that diamond; I own to the contents."

Marie and Maximilian were formally married on April 27th, and the people, weary of the state of uncertainty in which they had been kept, seemed content to make the best of the marriage. The prince was a German, did not speak their language or understand their customs; but then he was prepossessing, and would doubtless make as good a defender of their liberties as could be found. With the marriage, Marie practically ceased to appear as a direct participant in political affairs. Her new husband was devoted to her, and for a time things looked more encouraging for this last scion of a great race. True, Louis sent his barber-surgeon, Olivier, to protest, in the name of the suzerain, against the marriage of his feudal ward without his consent. But the Flemish nobles and their lady laughed at the barber, who really came more to spy than in the hope that this mediæval protest would avail aught. Later, in his first battle, Maximilian completely

defeated the French army under the traitor Lord Crèvecœur, at Guinegatte, August 7, 1479.

Meanwhile, a son had been born to the young couple, and their domestic happiness was unclouded. Fortune was not to smile on them long, however, for the Flemings were constitutionally rebellious, now refusing to grant Maximilian supplies necessary for defence, till he actually had to pawn his wife's jewels, now blaming all their misfortunes on this foreigner, now distracting his attention from the still encroaching French king by riots and revolts. In the unequal contest the French were destined to win; and ere Marie had been married five years an accident cost her her life and left Maximilian almost as helpless in the hands of the Flemings as she had been. She had been hunting, a sport of which both she and Maximilian were passionately fond, when her horse threw her. The injuries might not have proved fatal if medical aid had been resorted to in time; but Marie, with pitiful false modesty, refused to submit to the examination of the surgeons, and died, after lingering three weeks, March 26, 1482. Her infant son, Philippe le Beau, remained as the nominal heir of Burgundy; but the guarding of the duchy was a hopeless task when a regency must control affairs, and so with Marie passed away the last independent ruler of the house of Burgundy, whose greatness was to be transmitted to and surpassed by the son of this Philippe, the great Emperor Charles V.

The brief and troubled life of Marie de Bourgogne affords but little opportunity for an estimate of her capabilities. She was reared under conditions the most unfavorable to the development of independence, self-reliance, and capacity for practical affairs; for feudalism, even at its best, as we have seen, produced but few women who were capable of ruling a nation, and the spectacular chivalry of the

Burgundian court found no place for woman but as an angelic, gracious, beautiful spectator of its great shows, one infinitely removed by every detail of her education and of her social life from the sordid cares of life and of politics. Marie was not of that rare type that might, even under such conditions, rise to power; she was not strong enough of will to mark out a policy of her own and bend men and conditions to serve that policy. In not one of her public acts as duchess can we find that she was uninfluenced by those around her; she was indeed swayed first by one set of counsellors, then by another, the natural result being inconsistency, duplicity, and inefficiency. But where the mere woman appears, where there is room for the operation of impulses purely personal, as in the case of Hugonet and Humbercourt and in the selection of her husband, Marie displays nobler feelings; and though the cause of civilization was to be advanced by the dismemberment of the heterogeneous Burgundian duchy and the annexation of the greater part of it to France, our sympathy is not with the spider who sat spinning his meshes of intrigue in the den at Plessis-lez-Tours, but with the generous, impulsive young ruler whom we know he will fatally entangle. With Marie in Burgundy, as with the passionate and unhappy Marguerite of Anjou in England, we are inclined to forgive the ruler who could not rule, or who resorted to infamous means in her struggles to rule, when we remember that both were women brought face to face with tremendous problems and made the sport of crafty, cruel, unscrupulous foes and faithless friends.

Chapter XV

Anne de Beaujeu: The Consolidation of the Kingdom

XV

ANNE DE BEAUJEU: THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE KINGDOM

C'EST la moins folle femme du monde, car, de femme sage il n'y en a point (she is the least foolish woman in the world; there are no wise ones). The cynical old king, Louis XI., sums up for us in this epigram his estimate of the daughter whom he loved and trusted more than any other person of his own blood. This daughter, Anne de France, was but a young woman when her father died, but the tortuous policy and the sagacious aims of Louis XI. had become familiar to her as a mere girl, and she lived to continue and in some sort to carry to successful terminations the principal schemes cherished by her father.

Almost from her very birth, Louis had used her in his intrigues, proposing her marriage now with this prince, now with that, according as the needs of the moment suggested. When the chief of his enemies, Charles le Téméraire, lost his first wife, Louis proposed that he marry the princess Anne, at that time a child of two years, and offered as her dowry Champagne, if Charles would agree that Normandy should revert to the Crown without question. Yet, a year later, 1466, when Louis had obtained possession of Normandy and had no further immediate need of Charles, he offered Anne to the son of the Duke of Calabria. Neither bargain was meant to be kept; but

Charles, partly out of anger at the king's bad faith, married Margaret of York. Seven years later, when Louis had made up his mind to conciliate the house of Bourbon, Anne was betrothed to Pierre de Bourbon, Sire de Beaujeu; and as no new alliance presented itself as desirable, Anne de France became Anne de Beaujeu.

Anne was enough like her father in the hardness and crafty resoluteness of her character to win his confidence. We see her intrusted with the care of one of the most important of those noble wards whom Louis loved to bring to his court and keep under tutelage, Marguerite, the little daughter of Maximilian and Marie de Bourgogne. When the fear of assassination had driven the king to immure himself in Plessis-lez-Tours, and to hedge himself about with such fantastic and intricate defences that none but his favored lowborn servants could enter with ease and hope of return, he would sometimes admit this favored daughter. And when, in the imminence of death, he determined that the silly dauphin, jealously guarded at Amboise, should learn something and should know that the power of the sceptre was soon to pass to him, it was Anne de Beaujeu again on whom he relied. He enjoined the dauphin Charles to keep about him the faithful servants who had made France; especially did he recommend "Master Oliver," without whom, he said, "I should have been nothing." But, before all others, the dauphin was to honor and obey his wise sister, Anne de Beaujeu, the least foolish woman in the world.

In spite of astrologers; in spite of liberal doses of that expensive panacea, potable gold, administered by his insolent physician, Jacques Coictier; in spite of a second anointing from the sacred *ampulla,* brought from Rheims for that special purpose; in spite of all the silver saints stuck on the rim of his cap—the spirit went out of the

body of Louis XI., and France welcomed his death as a deliverance. In his zeal for the destruction of feudalism and the upbuilding of a national government, he had become a tyrant. But the work he had begun must go on, if France was not to step back fifty or a hundred years in progress. The new king, Charles VIII., was but a boy of fourteen, and deplorably immature. He could hardly read and write, nor did natural intelligence supply the defects of education; for he was weak in mind, weak in body, and easily influenced for good or for ill. With such a tool ready for the hand of any ambitious noble who would destroy France, the outlook was not cheering. But it was the good fortune of France to find a ruler who could and did control the king till such time as the fruits of the wise despotism of Louis could be safely gathered; and this ruler was a woman.

As Charles had already attained the legal majority prescribed for the heir to the throne, there could be no regency. But Anne de Beaujeu and her husband had been named by the late king as the tutors of Charles, to the exclusion of Louis d'Orléans, who, as first prince of the blood royal, had a prescriptive right to the guardianship. And just as Blanche de Castille, under different conditions and by different means, had managed to displace Philippe Hurepel, so Anne now managed to outwit and supplant Louis d'Orléans.

She had already laid the foundations of her influence by making friends of the best counsellors and captains of the late king. And her brother, to whom she was a divinity to be worshipped and feared, was already so accustomed to submission to her will that it did not occur to him to resist her authority now. In default of a regent, there was a royal council, and in this council Anne managed to assure herself of a powerful following. To be sure, at

first there was nothing to fear, since Louis d'Orléans, young and fond of pleasure, was engaged in satisfying his tastes after the long and irksome restraint to which he had been subjected by Louis XI.; and so, in place of politics, he took pleasure, availing himself of every distraction that could help him to forget the terrible days of the old king, or the ugly face and crooked body of the king's daughter, who was his wife. Nevertheless, Louis d'Orléans was the natural leader of the opposition to the control of Anne de Beaujeu, and the latter lost no time in securing for herself, through her husband, a majority in the council, a body composed of such diverse elements, and so uncertain of its own mind, that it was easy for a determined leader to carry her policies through its divided and hesitating ranks.

Anne was only twenty-two, but already there was coming to be a special significance attached to her sobriquet, *Madame la Grande;* for the imperious will, the boldness and shrewdness combined, the restless energy, the constant watchfulness of the woman made itself felt throughout that government in which she had no legal standing. Her governing was done under constitutional forms, in the name of the king, in the name of the council; but people knew that she had dictated to the king what he should do, and had imposed her will upon the council. Until the States-General had met, voted supplies, been promised reforms, and then dissolved, Anne was very guarded, very conciliatory in her policy; the unjust acts of Louis XI. were set right—where it did not cost too much to do so—and certain obnoxious persons, such as Olivier le Daim, were sacrificed to popular hatred. As soon as the States-General had been disposed of, however, the two parties in the council began to assume a more hostile attitude toward each other, and the charge that Madame la Grande

was meddling in things that concerned her not was raised by the Duke of Orléans. His cousin, Dunois, and other persons anxious for the restriction of the royal power, persuaded Louis d'Orléans that it was an outrage that a woman should reduce him to the second place in the national council, and make herself virtually queen of France. Incited by these plotters, Louis determined to loosen the hold of Anne upon the young king.

Violating a solemn oath he had taken, under Louis XI., to abstain from compromising relations with the enemies of France, he began to seek allies against the Beaujeu faction, and turned first to Brittany. But a temporary eclipse of the Breton favorite, Landois, who had ruled his master almost as Olivier had ruled Louis, made the visit of Orléans a fruitless one, and he returned to Paris to resort to means more in conformity with his tastes. The young king was intensely fond of brilliant festivities; romantic love of the spectacular side of chivalry was his ruling passion; and therefore Louis sought to alienate him from Anne by providing him with amusements. Jousts and tourneys, balls, masquerades, all as brilliant and attractive as Louis could make them, filled the two months after Charles's royal entry into his "well beloved city of Paris" (July 5, 1484). Charles was beginning to think that his "fair cousin of Orléans" was a very delightful companion, and so much more obliging than that high tempered and dictatorial sister whom he had been obeying; besides, what right had she to dictate to him: was he not a king? Before the danger grew acute, before these vague questionings in the royal head assumed definite shape, Anne picked up her precious sovereign and carried him away from gay Paris and the temptations of the fascinating Louis. Then it was that Louis left the court, resolved not to return until he had overthrown the Beaujeu party.

The great nobles of the land were ready enough to unite in opposition to the arbitrary rule of a woman, and of a woman who had not the shadow of a constitutional right to rule. But though discontent was general among the nobles, they yet lacked energy and direction, while the commons took but little interest in a mere squabble among their rulers. Perhaps the general opinion was somewhat like that of the University of Paris, to which Louis had appealed, namely, that the power was in the hands best fitted to wield it. Undoubtedly, the Parliament of Paris was of this opinion; for when Louis presented a long petition reciting his grievances and protesting against the usurpation of Madame de Beaujeu, who held in unlawful subjection the person of the king, who intended to keep the said king in tutelage until his twenty-first year, who had unlawfully levied taxes, and who meditated the destruction of the petitioner,—when Louis presented these charges, and besought the Parliament to command that the king be brought back to Paris, the president very prudently gave answer that the court of Parliament was a court of law, and had nothing to do with administrative matters, and that no one had a right thus to appear before the court to remonstrate against the administrative acts of the sovereign. There was little comfort in all this for Louis; and while he was still hesitating in Paris, Anne sent a troop of men-at-arms to arrest him. A hasty flight alone saved him, and he at once repaired to Alençon, where the duke received him as a friend in distress; while Anne, hastening back to Paris, deprived Orléans and his accomplices of their honors and military commands.

The forces of the discontented princes would have been superior to those at the disposal of Anne, if they could have been brought together; but their domains were scattered, and they themselves were vacillating, jealous of

each other, reluctant to resort at once to foreign aid. With her usual promptness, Anne intercepted their communications, seized and executed summarily their spies, and herself negotiated with Brittany and with the Flemish towns; while Dunois and Orléans were surprised and captured in Beaugency by La Trémoille, commanding for Anne. For the moment, the rebellion had been put down without serious loss. Dunois was exiled to Asti, and Louis of Orléans, who had not even been able to win the support of his own city, came back to court in October, 1485.

A new danger, however, threatened Anne's supremacy during the next spring, when Maximilian of Austria, now titular King of the Romans, invaded Artois. Jubilant at the prospect of securing such an ally against Madame la Grande, a new league of the great nobles signed a secret treaty with Maximilian in December. With the Dukes of Orléans, Brittany, Lorraine, and Bourbon, the Counts of Dunois, Nevers, Angoulême, and a host of others thus leagued against her, the situation of Madame de Beaujeu was most precarious. Besides actual warfare, she had to fear continual plots having for their object the capture of the young king. The great Philippe de Comines, along with Louis d'Orléans, was implicated in one of these plots, and was seized by the watchful Anne, while Louis fled to Brittany and urged its duke to invade France.

Anne did not hesitate as to her course, but marched into southern France, taking the king, the warrant of her authority, with her. This sudden diversion disconcerted the nobles, and one town after another opened its gates to Charles VIII., till, in March, 1487, he entered Bordeaux in triumph, and the old Duke of Bourbon and the Count of Angoulême made their submission. The Breton nobles, angry at the interference in their affairs by the rebellious French princes, who had completely won the confidence

of the weak Duke François II., resolved to expel the foreigners, and appealed to Anne to help them. She responded by despatching a force of twelve thousand men into Brittany and besieging the duke and Louis d'Orléans in Nantes. But the town having received reinforcements from Maximilian, the royal army raised the siege and occupied strategic points in Brittany. While the season forbade military operations, Anne returned to Paris with her king, and had resort to law in her contest with the rebels. She issued a summons to the Dukes of Orléans and Brittany to appear before the court of Parliament. Upon their failure to appear, however, another summons was issued; but no sentence was passed, since Anne did not care to push matters to extremes in the case of these great personages, whom she hoped to conciliate; but Dunois, Comines, and others of the rebels were condemned for contumacy, their goods were confiscated, and, if their persons could be laid hold of, they were imprisoned. Comines, historian and scholar as he was, and favorite of Louis XI., had a taste of imprisonment in one of those famous iron cages of which his old master had been so fond.

In the spring of 1488 the power of the house of Beaujeu was increased by the death of the Duke of Bourbon, to whose duchy Anne's husband was heir. Nevertheless, fortune was not favoring Anne in all things; for the Breton nobles, having repented of their rebellion against their own duke, and beginning to suspect that Madame Anne meant to keep her troops in Brittany, now changed sides, and expelled the French garrisons from some of the towns. In retaliation, Anne's general, Louis de La Trémoille, began a vigorous campaign in Brittany early in April, which culminated in the decisive victory of Saint-Aubin-du-Cormier (July 27th). The Breton army was completely routed,

and the rebel nobles, including Louis d'Orléans and the Prince of Orange, fell into the power of Anne. Louis, her most dangerous enemy, was confined in the tower of Bourges, where he might meditate, without endangering the public peace, upon the injustice of allowing a woman to govern France. Within a month after the battle, François II., humbly suing for peace to his "sovereign" Charles VIII., signed a treaty in which he promised to exclude from his court and dukedom the enemies of France, and to negotiate no marriage for his daughters without the advice and consent of Charles. In the name of Charles, as usual, all this was done; but it was really a signal triumph for Anne de Beaujeu. The pride of her Breton adversary was broken, and he did not long survive the treaty; some have declared that he died of chagrin at being no longer able to betroth his daughters first to one suitor and then to another. Whether of chagrin or of some more ordinary complaint, he died in September, 1488, and it then developed that his eldest daughter, Anne, a girl of not quite twelve, had indeed been promised to three parties simultaneously.

Out of the confused situation in Brittany it was Madame de Beaujeu's task to make profit for France. The eldest daughter and heiress of the late duke, Anne de Bretagne, was enjoined by the royal council from assuming her title of duchess until authorized to do so by the king, who claimed not only the feudal wardship of the heiress of Brittany, but her very coronet itself, under the terms of a treaty between the Crown and certain of the great barons of Brittany, including Marshal de Rieux, then guardian of Anne de Bretagne. This treaty, dating from 1484, had recognized the claims of the king as superior to those of the female heirs in Brittany, as in other fiefs where the court was endeavoring to enforce the *Loi Salique*. But

Marshal de Rieux and his friends had now changed their views, seeing that the pretensions of the crown would result in the extinction of Brittany as a distinct and independent province; they preferred governing the province through the young duchess to being governed by Madame la Grande.

Madame la Grande was well aware that her claims on behalf of the king would not be peaceably admitted; she was prepared to encounter armed resistance, and probably foresaw her opportunity in the quarrels that would inevitably break out among the Bretons as to who was to control the heiress, and, above all, as to who was to marry her. The ducal court of Brittany soon became the hotbed of intrigue, where divided counsel prevailed, and where alliances were made on all sides and adhered to on none. With the aid of Maximilian, of the Spaniards, and of the English,—all of whom were more or less concerned, and more or less willing to support Brittany against France,—the Bretons could have offered successful resistance to the French armies. But the jealousies of the Breton nobles, the craft and ability of Anne de Beaujeu, and the feminine caprice of Anne de Bretagne, made ineffective the best efforts of France's enemies. The Sire d'Albret, a man of hideous aspect, of detestable character, and very nearly four times as old as the bride he claimed, affirmed that Anne de Bretagne had been promised to him. Marshal de Rieux, Anne's guardian, upheld the claims of D'Albret, and in behalf of his protégé resorted to fraud, in fabricating proofs of the alleged betrothal, and to force. Meanwhile, the enterprising Dunois formed a plot to kidnap the duchess and carry her off to France. Seeking to escape these two dangers, the poor girl fled to Nantes, where, however, De Rieux had the gates shut against her. Rennes, more compassionate and more patriotic, offered

her a refuge till the immediate danger was passed. But there was no rest or safety for her as long as she remained unmarried. The Sire d'Albret was loathsome to her; therefore, under the temporary influence of other advisers, she gave her hand to the ambassador of Maximilian, and was secretly married to this proxy-husband, with every form and ceremony that could be thought of to make the strange compact binding.

A secret of such momentous consequence could not, in the nature of things, remain a secret for any long period. The mock marriage had taken place in the summer of 1490. Within a few months, the bride, bursting with the importance of her new dignity, was actually signing decrees as "Queen of the Romans," and the troubles in Brittany began with renewed violence on the part of the disappointed aspirants to the control of the duchy. Anne de Beaujeu, never dismayed, even by complications that might to others seem hopeless, at once took advantage of the resentment of D'Albret and De Rieux, secured the alliance of the latter and bought outright that of the former, and so was soon able to regain military supremacy in Brittany, and to begin her plans for breaking off the marriage between Anne de Bretagne and Maximilian. Had the latter been a native Burgundian, or had he concentrated his resources for the attainment of one capital object, the whole history of France might have been changed: we might have seen a second Burgundian power, now strengthened by the rugged and yet unsubdued Brittany, hemming France in on the east, on the west, on the north, and utterly stunting the growth of that national unity which was to make France a great and homogeneous power. But Maximilian was busy patching up the power of his Austrian dominions, and trying to keep on reasonably good terms with his Flemish subjects; meanwhile, he thought his

bride might look out for herself, and was not aware that Anne de Beaujeu was preparing a coup that would deprive him forever of Brittany.

The influence of Anne de Beaujeu was already showing signs of a decline; and it therefore behooved her to work while it was yet day, for the time was fast coming when her boy king would no longer submit to sisterly tyranny. Charles was in his twentieth year when, in the spring of 1491, he made his first independent move, with a prospect of still more dangerous manifestations of independence. One evening he left Plessis, as if to go hunting, and rode toward Bourges. He had secretly given orders that Louis d'Orléans should be released, and went to meet and be reconciled with this dangerous adversary of his sister. Louis, who had been sobered by his confinement, was overjoyed at his release, and met the king with every manifestation of loyal devotion and respect. Fortunately, Louis cherished no feelings of resentment against the house of Beaujeu, and willingly acceded to the formal reconciliation proposed by the king, signing, with Pierre de Bourbon, a treaty of amity and fraternal love, in which all past wrongs and differences were to be forgotten. Louis was faithful to the spirit of this agreement, and France had no longer to fear his factious activity. And when Dunois, always ready to plot, always ready to undo his own plots, also agreed to a reconciliation, the personal power of Anne in the royal council may have been weakened, but the ultimate triumph of the principles for which she had contended was assured. Though no longer dominant in all things, she could yet shape the policy of the kingdom and contrive the ruin of Maximilian's ambitious schemes.

To unite France and Brittany had been the dream of the French kings, but again and again had the dream proved a delusion. Louis XI., always awake to every possible

chance of advantage, had bought the claims of the heiress of the ancient line of Charles de Blois and Jeanne de Penthièvre; but no opportunity of profiting by these claims had been vouchsafed his greedy soul. Now the coveted province seemed more hopelessly alienated than ever. For Anne de Bretagne was married to Maximilian, and the young King of France was solemnly betrothed to the daughter of Maximilian, Marguerite, who had actually been reared at the French court on purpose to fit her for the post of queen, and who had already received, by courtesy, the titles and honors of her station, though her youth still precluded the consummation of the marriage. How to rob Maximilian of his bride and dispose of his daughter was a problem that might well have seemed hopeless of solution. But Madame de Beaujeu was not hopeless, nor was she overscrupulous.

Before Maximilian could bring his Austrian-Hungarian war to a satisfactory conclusion, the French armies had established almost complete control of Brittany. The young duchess, none too pleased at the neglect of this treaty-husband, was easily persuaded that the marriage, contracted against the will of her feudal lord, and never consummated by a husband who seemed more absorbed in politics than fired by passion, was not really a religious compact, but a treaty that could be abrogated like any other treaty. She consented to break off the match with her King of the Romans, but, having once borne the title of queen, neither count nor duke would she have for a husband, only a king. Anne de Beaujeu promptly suggested that the heiress of Brittany should replace the daughter of Maximilian, and marry Charles VIII. On November 15th Charles entered Rennes. To Maximilian and the rest of Europe this seemed but the honest fulfilment of the terms of the treaty of peace extorted from

unwilling Brittany; no one outside of the trusted friends of the duchess and of the king had the least suspicion that, three days later, the pair had had an interview, and that, in the presence of Louis d'Orléans, of Anne and Pierre de Bourbon, of the chancellor of Brittany, and of a few others, they were formally betrothed.

Secrecy was essential to the success of the plan. This secret was well kept, particularly as the time of repression was short, for Anne de Beaujeu was wise enough to conclude the matter as soon as possible. Within a month, Charles went to the château of Langeais, in Touraine, whither Anne de Bretagne followed him. Before the world knew what was intended, they were married and were on their way to Plessis-lez-Tours, where the gloomy old den of Louis XI. was enlivened by brilliant royal festivities. The ghost of the old king, however unfriendly to mirth and jollity, must have looked on approvingly and grinned with joy at the thought of the splendid and long-coveted dowry that his wise daughter had won for France. He, too, would have taken a malicious pleasure in the very means Anne had used to hoodwink and cheat Maximilian. Duplicity, the most boldfaced trickery, had been resorted to, to lead Maximilian off the true scent. While the marriage articles that would rob him of his Breton bride were being arranged, Anne de Beaujeu was keeping him occupied with the details of an arrangement that would grant free passage to his bride when she saw fit to repair to the husband who could not find time to come to her. And while he was carrying on this negotiation, in good faith, came the news that Charles had robbed him of his bride and was sending back his daughter. It was a double insult, and one that might have cost France dearly had Maximilian's power equalled his anger and resentment. Nothing but "diplomacy" could have accomplished the union of

France and Brittany, that sort of diplomacy which in a private individual would be condemned by every ethical law, but which often results most advantageously for the state, and hence is condoned.

With this marriage the great rôle of Anne de Beaujeu ceases; for though she continued to advise, she could no longer command, and the government of France was left to Charles VIII. Anne was one of those counsellors who raised their voices in unheeded protest against the impolitic rashness of Charles's campaign in Italy, a campaign whose mad extravagance and disastrous results fully justified all that Anne had said to dissuade her brother. But in this, as in other matters of less moment, it was evident that Anne's day of usefulness had passed. By the time her old rival, Louis d'Orléans, became Louis XII. she had completely retired from politics, and continued to govern nothing but her husband, in spite of the generous confidence shown in her by the new king. Louis XII. cherished no resentment for the injuries inflicted upon the young Louis d'Orléans by Madame la Grande, and gratefully acknowledged how important had been her services to the crown. But Madame la Grande intervened no more in public affairs, though she lived on until 1522.

The wisdom and foresight of this great daughter of the hated tyrant of Plessis may be appreciated more fully if we will but consider for a moment the history of that Anne de Bretagne whose heritage she had secured for the crown of France. The early history of this princess has been already sketched in the preceding pages. She was but fifteen when Madame la Grande brought about the marriage with Charles VIII. Already, however, she had manifested traits that accorded but ill with the character of her royal mate. For she was not only handsome, spirited, and naturally independent and intelligent, but fond of

intellectual pursuits, almost a scholar, knowing Latin and Greek, that new tongue that was just becoming the fashion in Europe, the tongue whose rich and deep literature, so long misunderstood or unknown during the Middle Ages, was to be most fruitful of inspirations for the Renaissance. Imagine her yoked with a prince of frivolous disposition, lacking even in ordinary intelligence, so ignorant that he could scarcely read and write, and interested chiefly in the idle shows of that chivalry in whose ranks he could not shine because of his awkward and weak frame. With admirable appreciation of her duty, Anne sunk the woman in the wife and queen, subordinating her own personality to that of a man whom she could not have respected, whom it seems impossible she could have loved. She resigned into his hands the administration of her own province of Brittany, and sought no share in the determination of the policy of the kingdom. Leaving politics to the king and his councillors, she devoted herself to the petty affairs of her court, regulated its accounts, decided its points of etiquette, kept its atmosphere pure and healthy, just as any little Breton housewife would have governed and made comfortable the home of her husband. Whether she loved Charles or not, she always treated him with respect.

The seven years of their married life were passed without a sign from her that the union had proved anything but the happiest in the world. On April 7, 1498, Charles, walking hurriedly through a dark corridor of the Château d'Amboise, where his father had kept him in confinement little different from imprisonment, struck his head against a scaffolding carelessly left in place by the workmen who were repairing the château, and died a few hours later. Anne made becoming show of grief, refused to be consoled, would not, it is said, touch food for three days, and insisted on wearing black in token of her grief,

though as queen she was entitled to wear white. Grief, she said, had unfitted her for the life at court; she must return to her native Brittany and seek in the administration of its affairs to banish the memory of the lost husband.

The wisdom of Anne de Beaujeu had united Brittany to France; it now seemed as if the good results of her diplomacy were to be lost. There had been a stipulation, it is true, in the contract of marriage between Anne de Bretagne and Charles, that, in case of the death of the king, his widow could marry none but the successor or the heir presumptive to the crown of France; but this stipulation now seemed about to prove unavailing. For the heir presumptive at the time of Anne's widowhood was the little Count François d'Angoulême, a boy not yet out of the nursery, while the successor of Charles VIII. was already married to Jeanne, sister of the late king. It was a dilemma as serious as that solved by Anne de Beaujeu seven years before. But, as has been shown in this case, "be there a will, and wisdom finds a way," or if not wisdom, the hocus-pocus of diplomacy. In the present case it was soon apparent that, on both sides, there was a will; and though the way lay directly over the bleeding heart of a good woman, that way was found and followed by Louis XII.

Before the death of Charles, no one had suspected that Louis cherished any sentiments but those of loyal respect for Anne de Bretagne. When he saw her go away, taking with her the dowry that had cost so dear, the court discovered that the new king was hopelessly enamored of the mourning Breton widow. Anne was, it is true, personally attractive, and Louis was known to be not only susceptible to feminine charms but deplorably unhappy with his own wife; nevertheless, one cannot accord unquestioning faith to the genuineness of an affection that was so

obviously politic, whether genuine or counterfeit. Anne, too, despite her widow's weeds and her tears, could not help showing that she left the court with regret. In justice to her, it cannot be said that she had betrayed her willingness to return Louis's sentiments; yet he must have felt reasonably sure of his standing in her heart before he undertook to make room for her by his side.

Almost the first scene of our history has to do with just such an instance of shameless quibbling about sacred things as that we must now record. Louis's wife, Jeanne de France, was a good, gentle, loving woman, who had clung with despairing affection to a husband who despised her, who was unfaithful to her, who was now to humiliate her. The poor creature was unfortunately ugly, and deformed, and twenty-two years of unfailing devotion—it was in great part owing to her incessant appeals that the young Charles VIII. had liberated Louis from Bourges—had not reconciled the ungrateful husband to the marriage. He now bethought himself that this marriage had been contracted when he was but a youth, under threat of death from Louis XI., that Jeanne had borne him no children, and that they were related within the degrees prohibited by the Church. He appealed to the head of the Church, the notorious Alexander VI., to annul an incestuous union that was a burden to his conscience. Needless to say that, in the corrupt papal court of that period, the appeal was supported by arguments more weighty than honorable. Needless to say that, in spite of the heart-broken protests of Jeanne, Alexander, and his son Cæsar Borgia, having received their price, granted a decree annulling the marriage.

Having disposed of his wife, Louis sought the disconsolate widow in Brittany. Anne made some show of reluctance, of inconsolable grief, and of scruples moral

and sentimental. As a matter of fact, however, she had consented to marry Louis before the divorce from Jeanne had been secured, and within four months from the death of Charles. The decree of divorce, brought by magnificent Cæsar Borgia himself, was published in December, 1498, and the marriage of Anne and Louis XII. was celebrated at Nantes in January, 1499.

Anne had profited by her sojourn at the French court; the new contract of marriage was far from being as favorable to France as that imposed by Anne de Beaujeu. It was now stipulated that she should retain in her own hands the administration of Brittany, and that the administrative offices and the ecclesiastical benefices should be filled by natives of Brittany only and with the consent of the duchess; that the ancient rights and privileges so dear to the Bretons should be respected; and that the province should descend to the second child of the marriage, or to the second child of her child, if there should be but one born to her and Louis, or to her own heirs next of kin, in case the marriage should prove childless. But little hope was left in this contract that the dearest wish of Anne de Beaujeu should be gratified, and that Brittany should remain French.

A complete change of character and of policy in a woman of twenty-three is very remarkable; and we are therefore surprised to find that the Anne who returned to Paris as the queen of Louis XII. was a very different person from the meek lady who had submitted to the ignorant and light-headed Charles. Not only did she insist upon and exercise her authority in Brittany, but she made the weight of her will felt in the affairs of the whole kingdom, pursued with ungenerous vindictiveness those who thwarted or opposed her, was jealous of her husband, of Madame de Bourbon, and of Louise de Savoie, mother of

the young prince who one day was to be King François I. For her second husband, a man infinitely more worthy of respect than Charles, she appeared to have little tenderness. He was always considerate and good humored, admiring her and loving her even when she was domineering and almost insolent in her attitude toward him and toward his favorites. Her prudence and her regard for the decencies of life, too apt to be forgotten in the dissolute life now fostered by increased luxury and culture, were the only traits of Queen Anne that could be considered admirable. Her patronage of art, and of letters to a certain extent, her liberality to her favorite Bretons, had endeared her to a small circle; but neither France, which she hated, nor the best counsellors of the king, whom she thwarted and discomfited by her absolute ascendency over the king, had any cause to regret the early death of the queen, in 1514. It was fitting that, according to her wish, her heart should be buried in Brittany, while the body rested in Saint-Denis; for that heart had been unwaveringly Breton. To Louis she was *ma Bretonne;* and Breton she was in the most marked traits of her character; a woman of more than usual intellect and ability, with appreciation for art and literature, with a high sense of domestic virtue, and yet always hard, cold, shrewd, and narrow-minded.

The contrast between the two Annes who fill so large a place in the closing years of the fifteenth century is as complete as it is striking. Both were so placed by the accident of birth and fortune as to have much power, for good or for ill, in the destiny of France. But while Anne de Bretagne showed herself merely a woman, ruled by personal motives, jealous of power in small things and blind to or unconscious of the far-reaching results that might spring from the exercise of that power, Anne de Beaujeu

had the broad mind, the far-seeing and calculating intellect of the statesman. Her intellect, indeed, was essentially masculine: "Madame de Beaujeu," says a contemporary historian, "would have been worthy to wear the crown, by her prudence and by her courage, if nature had not excluded her from the sex in whom the right to rule was vested." Anne de Bretagne was self-willed and obstinate, seeking the gratification of mere caprice; Anne de Beaujeu was inflexible and tenacious of purpose, but that purpose had in view the consolidation of an empire, not the gratification of some whim or of some petty spite. One is tempted to compare the daughter of Louis XI. with that other great woman whose firm hand guided France through a perilous crisis in the second quarter of the thirteenth century. Blanche de Castille, too, had to rule and consolidate a kingdom menaced by feudal anarchy during the minority of the sovereign. But she had constitutional right to support her regency; Anne de Beaujeu had no such right, and the difficulties with which she had to contend, though sooner ended, were more serious in themselves, perhaps, than those domestic intrigues and rebellions which Blanche could face without having to guard her frontiers from powerful and hostile neighbors. By her political achievements Madame la Grande merits comparison with the mother of Saint Louis. And yet it is in the very success of her tortuous, unscrupulous, dishonest policy that we find witness against the character of Anne. Political trickery, political duplicity, however beneficent in its results, leaves us with a strong aversion to the trickster; even as we have an unconquerable distrust of and contempt for the spy, howbeit he has risked life and honor for love of country, even so we grudge our praise to those who, like Louis XI. and his daughter, seek and attain great ends by despicable means, sacrificing truth, honor,

sentiment, to win for the nation the provinces of a Marie de Bourgogne, who does not know how to govern them, or the bride of a Maximilian, who does not know how to keep hold of her.

Great has been the change in France since Constance came from fair Provence to scandalize the monkish Robert's court; since Eleanor d'Aquitaine and her romantic troubadour friends taught France how to love gracefully and sing of love sweetly; since Mahaut d'Artois was a *paire de France,* with feudal power in her domain not to be questioned even by the sovereign; since Jeanne de Montfort, at the head of her knights, charged the mailed hosts. Provence has ceased either to scandalize or to enliven and instruct, for there is no more Provence save in name; no more gay and immoral troubadours; peers of France, you too are gone with "the snows of yester year," for when Charles VIII. was crowned at Rheims, the only lay peer, Philippe de Flandre, was not represented, the ancient domains of the other five having been annexed to the crown; and "the knights are dust." The little duchy of France, hedged about by vassals subject only in name, has grown into a great and almost unified kingdom, where provincial boundaries will soon be but imaginary lines on the map, a kingdom so rich and powerful, thanks to Louis XI. and Anne de Beaujeu, that it can afford to let a childish Charles VIII. dissipate its forces and its treasure in Italian wars, bringing back nothing more precious than the memory of the culture, the art, the restless new learning that make Florence, Venice, Milan glorious in this day of Renaissance. And France will cherish these memories of Italy, will kindle with enthusiasm for all these new *cinque-cento* marvels, will emulate and eclipse Italy. The monarchy is now the central power, the unquestioned power, in France, for which blessed consummation France

must thank some of the women whose stories we have told no less than her kings. For without Blanche de Castille, no Saint Louis; without Jeanne d'Arc, no Charles VII.; without Madame de Beaujeu, no Charles VIII. Soon the state will be the king, long before boastful Louis XIV. thunders forth, *L'état, c'est moi!* Already the eyes of all France are drawn to the court. There power resides, there literature and the arts will flourish, no longer leading a troubled and precarious existence. At the most brilliant court in Christendom a Francis I. no longer will indite Latin hymns, like the good Robert, but a cynical *souvent une femme varie,* while his sister, *La marguerite des marguerites de Navarre,* will rival Boccaccio with her fashionable tales of gallant and amorous gentlemen and ladies.

The age of blood and iron passes away, and with it must pass away the type of woman we have seen in the pages of this book. In our haste we might say that the passing age had not been one favorable to the development of feminine character, and that the new age will give the world women not only more cultivated and morally better, but also greater and of more potent influence upon the life of the world; and yet we must not forget that the very conditions of the Middle Ages most oppressive to women in general did of necessity bring to the fore women of strong character. A feudal châtelaine, if she were a Mahaut d'Artois, could rule, could make her mark in history; a queen of France, in an age when physical strength seemed essential in warfare, could subdue her enemies and make herself a great queen, if she were a Blanche de Castille. Under the new order, however, woman's activities and talents will be directed into channels more appropriate to her sex; in literature, in art, in social life, in diplomacy, woman will now play her part, more quietly, perhaps, but not with less far-reaching

influence on the history of France than if she actually controlled the armies of France. The really great women from this time forth will be found not on the throne but in the salon. In writing of Catherine de' Medici we should have to tell a great deal of the history of France, in writing of Anne d'Autriche, less; in writing of Madame de Maintenon, still less; but the life of such a woman as Blanche de Castille is the history of France, and in the life of such a woman as Jeanne d'Arc is the very spirit and soul of the nation.

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